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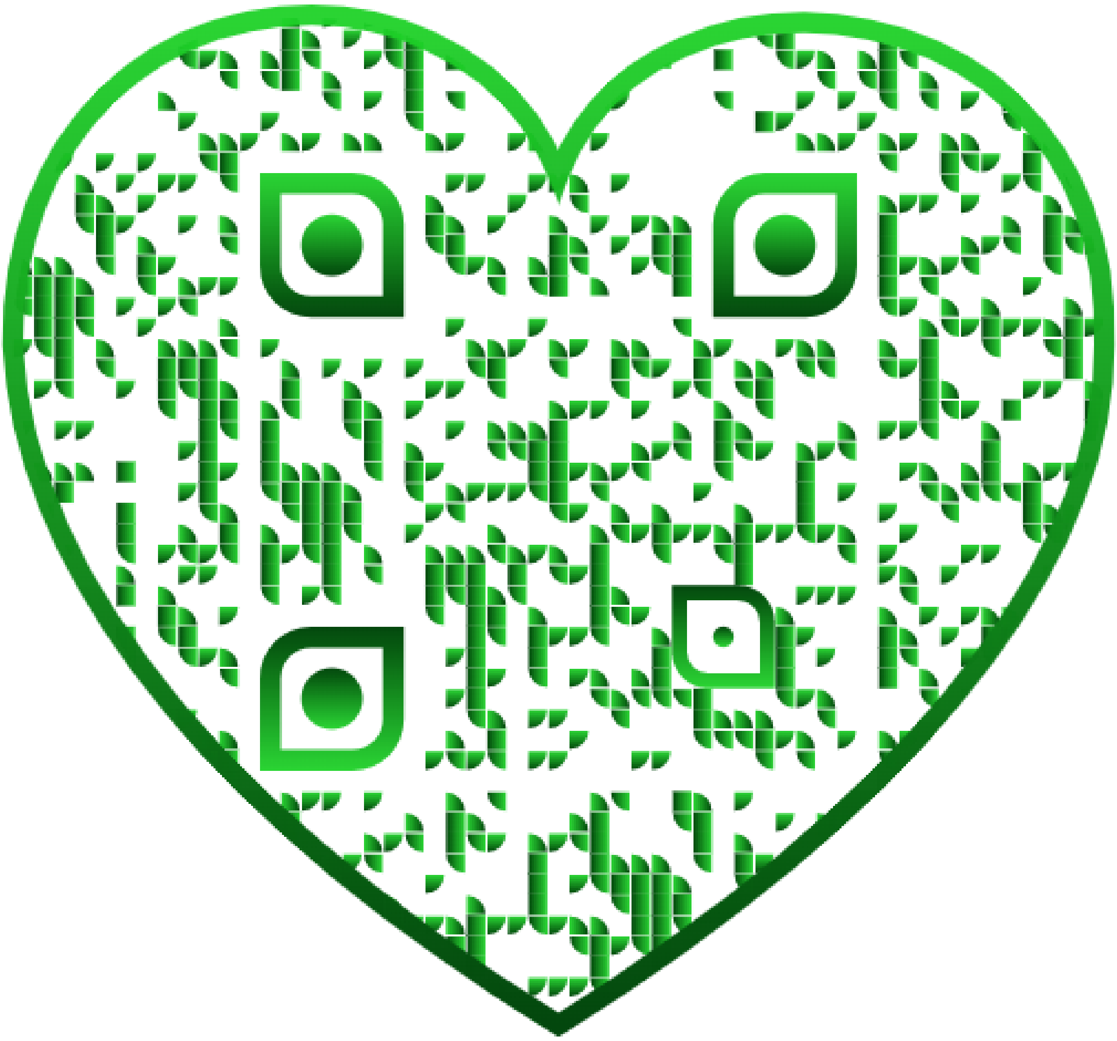

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COMMENT

FINALLY, THE GROUP TEST WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

The fifth-generation Land Cruiser has arrived, which means the group test we've been itching to do has finally come together: Land Cruiser, Defender and Grenadier. Which wins? No spoilers – you can find out on p40 – but it's a close call and a fascinating insight into the capability and breadth of cars that really are at the top of the automotive engineering game.

While many car styles are slowly dying out – coupés, estates (sob sob) – these hardcore 4x4s endure. There's no doubt that's because of the explosion of SUVs in the market, fed by consumer demand, but we all know that for 99.9% of people who choose them, no off-roading requirements are needed.

So isn't it admirable, inspiring and reassuring for us car enthusiasts that car makers like Toyota, Land Rover and Ineos, among others, are still putting so much time and effort into giving these vehicles such incredible off-road aptitude?

Someone clearly in agreement is 4x4 fan Matt Prior, who discusses the joys of driving them (p54) as part of our off-road special this week. If you fancy dabbling, we've found some excellent used options (p50), from the Fiat Panda 4x4 and Jeep Cherokee to the more obscure Volkswagen Iltis and Hummer H3. Now to find your nearest green lane...

Rachel Burgess, magazine editor
rachel.burgess@haymarket.com

Meanwhile, online...

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4x4 mega test

Don't just read about our off-road battle royale: watch the three contenders tackle all the obstacles in our exacting quarry.

Scorching-hot Octa driven

Road test editor Matt Saunders ventures to South Africa to test the new £150k Defender that's tearing up the fast-SUV rulebook.

Forgotten badge-engineered cars

Interested in the story behind the Asüna Sunrunner? If so, frankly, you *need* this article.

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8 UP TO 638BHP FOR QUICKEST SMART YET

AUTOCAR IMAGE

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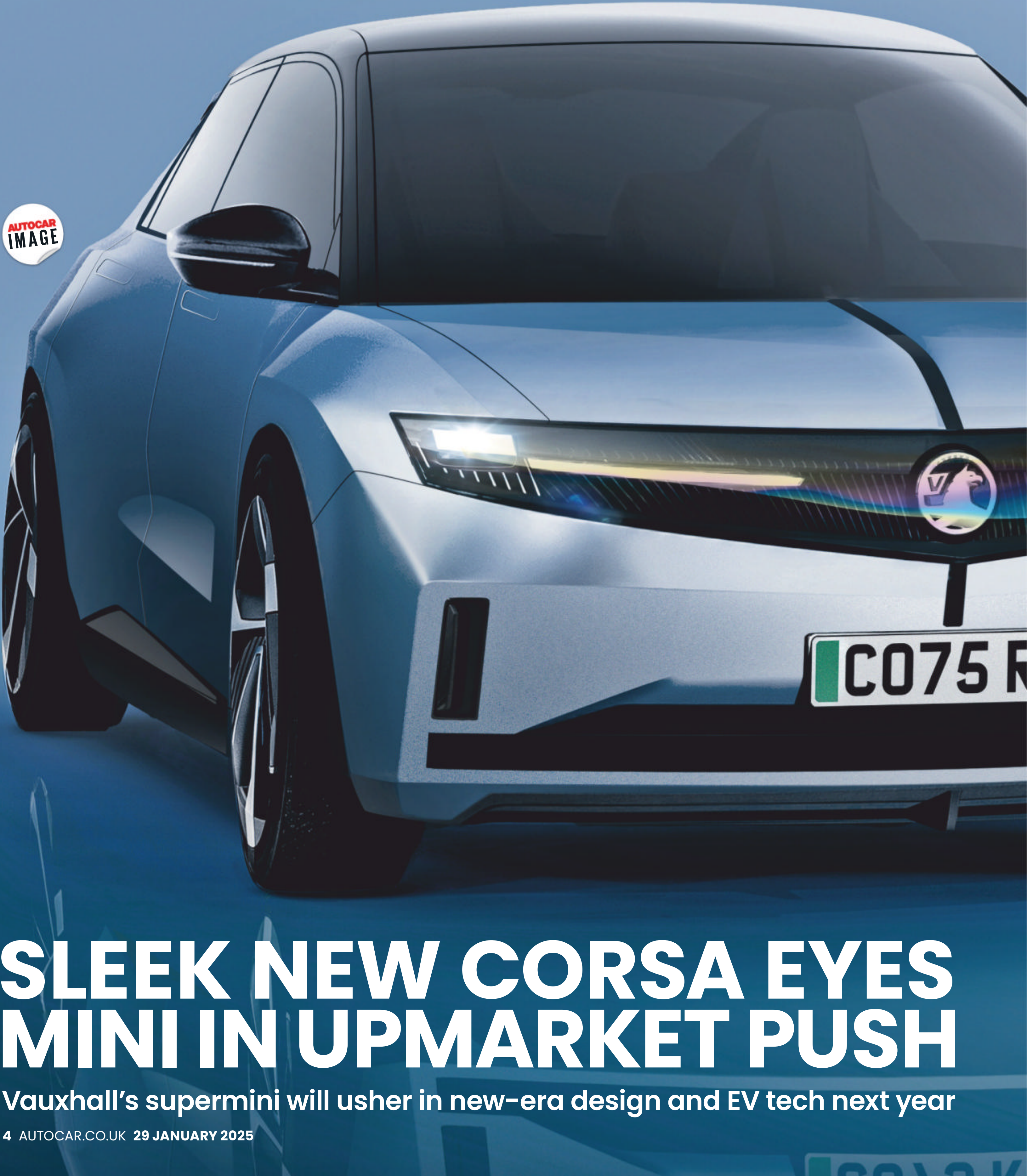
"Swapping to new architecture, the next-generation Corsa is about 10% larger than today's"



SLEEK NEW CORSA EYES MINI IN UPMARKET PUSH

Vauxhall's supermini will usher in new-era design and EV tech next year

Vauxhall's next-generation Corsa Electric will land in 2026 with a bold new look, dramatically longer range and more upmarket billing.

The new model is due to be one of the first cars to ride on parent company Stellantis's new STLA Small platform – a replacement for the CMP architecture that underpins today's car, as well as a host of technically related siblings from brands such as Peugeot and Jeep.

Able to accommodate hybrid powertrains but designed primarily for EVs, this new skateboard architecture has been engineered to underpin cars that range from the A-segment to the C-segment, with a primary focus on Europe.

Swapping to this new platform, the seventh-generation Corsa is around 10% larger overall than the car it replaces, according to a source familiar with the new model, and is capable in electric form of travelling much farther on a charge, with a maximum range of 340 miles, up from 246 miles today.

Autocar understands the next Corsa will also be positioned with more of a premium focus while keeping its price range – between £29,000 and £36,000 – broadly in line with today's car. This is part of a bid to steal sales from rivals such as the Renault 5 and Mini Cooper E, as well as the upcoming Volkswagen ID 2 and Cupra Raval.

The new Corsa will take heavy inspiration from Vauxhall's radical Experimental coupé concept from 2023, chiefly at the front end, where it will completely forego vents and intakes in favour of a minimalist, smooth treatment that signals its all-electric innards.

In place of a conventional grille, the electric Corsa will feature a slick new interpretation of Vauxhall's 'Vizor' motif. Ultra-slim LED headlights will be joined by a wraparound transparent panel that houses an illuminated badge and the sensors for the supermini's suite of ADAS functions.

Like the 2023 concept car, the new Corsa will have a prominent vertical crease running along its bonnet and down its visage, forming a cross-shaped 'compass' design with the headlights. This motif will be emulated at the rear and is set to become a defining signature of new-era Vauxhall models.

It is understood the British car maker is also looking to tone down its branding for its next generation of cars so the badging is expected to be kept to a minimum.

Meanwhile, flush-fitting door handles will contribute to the more minimalist aesthetic and aid aerodynamic efficiency, while new wheels – to be offered no smaller than 19in – will be designed to channel air as effectively as possible under the car.

The reinvention will be even more eye-catching in the Corsa's cabin, which, Autocar understands, will be totally overhauled in line with the brand's repositioning of its smallest model.

The primary objective is to offer functionality and material appeal that cement its new premium billing. Plush recycled textiles will be used extensively throughout the cockpit, it will feature new standard equipment including a panoramic roof and ambient lighting, and there will be a slick new 'floating' centre console that frees up space where a transmission tunnel would have been – a benefit of the EV-first STLA platform.

Notably, there will be no conventional driver display. It will be replaced by a standard-fit head-up display interface, as with the latest Mini Cooper.

The Corsa will follow its newer SUV stablemates in adopting a heavily reduced suite of physical buttons and switches. The primary control panel will be that new floating central touchscreen, angled towards the driver for easy on-the-move access in an evolution of the brand's 'Pure Panel' dashboard arrangement.

More details of the next Corsa's technical make-up will arrive around the start of next year, when Stellantis gives a full debrief about the STLA Small platform. But it has already been confirmed to house batteries of up to 82kWh in capacity and that would seem a likely option for the Corsa, given its top-end 340-mile range.

STLA Small retains 400V charging hardware, like CMP, and that will restrict charging speeds compared with more expensive 800V-equipped cars, but the new Corsa is expected to be able to top up more quickly than today's car, which maxes out at 100kW.

What remains unclear is whether Vauxhall will keep today's combustion Corsa on sale in its current form alongside the all-new EV or offer an ICE-powered version of the new-generation car.

While STLA Small can house hybrid systems, the company is unlikely to invest heavily in a new generation of ICE models when UK and EU legislation will force its retirement in a few years, so a heavy visual update of the current Corsa hybrid would seem the more viable option.

FELIX PAGE

VAUXHALL BRAND'S FUTURE IS SAFE IN THE UK

VAUXHALL Ellesmere Port
Electrifying Britain

Despite a long history of car production, the firm makes only vans in UK

Stellantis is committed to preserving Vauxhall as a stand-alone brand for the UK, amid uncertainty over each of the group's marques following the exit of CEO Carlos Tavares.

Vauxhall is twinned with Opel, sharing its product line-up. But with the British brand only active in a single market, doubts have been raised over its viability. However, Opel-Vauxhall CEO Florian Huettl said it will continue to play an active role in car development.

Asked how Stellantis can justify the existence of a marque for just one market in which its cars are no longer produced, Huettl said: "For Vauxhall, we value the history and heritage, and the role it plays in society.

"It's very important to understand that the cars are developed with the product planning teams from Opel and Vauxhall. They work together and find solutions appropriate for the brands."

Huettl's comments come as Stellantis prepares to shut Vauxhall's small van factory in Luton. Operations will be moved from the site, opened in 1905, to Ellesmere Port.

Huettl said Opel-Vauxhall still views itself "as a manufacturer in the UK" and hailed the move as a "positive development because we are investing in the future of manufacturing in Britain".

> "I don't believe our cars look quite as capable as they actually are"

POLESTAR 2 SUCCESSOR WILL FOLLOW NEW SUV

Replacement for popular fastback due by 2030 to join 7 SUV in line-up

The Polestar 2 will not be succeeded by the recently confirmed Polestar 7 SUV but will instead get its own direct replacement towards the end of the decade.

The news, confirmed to Autocar by new CEO Michael Lohscheller on his first official visit to the UK, dispels previous suggestions that the new Range Rover Evoque-sized 7 would slot into the line-up in place of the popular liftback.

Instead, Lohscheller made it clear Polestar was building and would maintain a five-tier series-production model line-up for the future: the 2 (liftback), 3 (large SUV), 4 (large saloon), 5 (four-door performance coupé) and 7 (mid-sized SUV), alongside the 6 (ultra-low-volume sports car).

Lohscheller revealed that the 2's replacement would be the first European-focused Polestar to adopt the single platform that the firm plans to use for every new model in future.

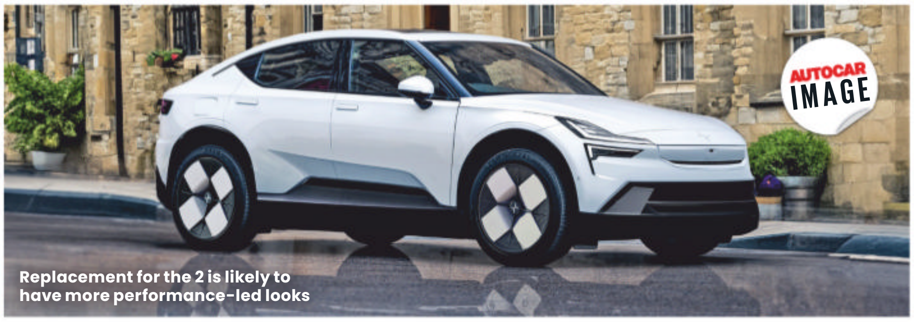
Polestar won't yet put a date on the 7's arrival or say when it intends to replace the 2, which Lohscheller reckons has "years to go".

Lohscheller, who replaced Thomas Ingenlath as CEO in August last year, believes the 2 has a timeless quality that embodies Polestar's core design values and has done so much to establish the company (170,000 sold, 35,000 in the UK) since it was launched in 2020.

Lohscheller also revealed that Polestar's future design direction will take a modest change of course, following the arrival of new, ex-Audi design boss Philipp Römers.

"What we've achieved so far is really good," he said, "but I'm asking Philipp to highlight the performance of our cars a little more. I don't believe they look quite as capable as they actually are. They should look a little more confident; they are maybe a bit too modest. But I don't expect radical changes, and how the designers actually achieve these subtle changes will be up to them."

STEVE CROPLEY



Replacement for the 2 is likely to have more performance-led looks

Polestar 2 still has 'years to go' in its current form, said boss Lohscheller

POLESTAR PLOTS 'AMBITIOUS' SALES GROWTH

Polestar will under Lohscheller move from shopping centre 'Spaces' to Volvo dealers

CEO Michael Lohscheller is promising Polestar's backers a sales volume improvement of 30% to 35% a year over the next three years.

"This is an ambitious target," he told Autocar, "but we are not dreaming. We now have three good cars in our showrooms and orders for the first quarter are up 37%. Even better, 55% of those orders are for our two newest cars, Polestar 3 and 4."

The biggest sales driver, he believes, will be Polestar's adoption of a network of retailers well versed in selling cars, demonstrating and financing them, and explaining their sometimes unfamiliar equipment.

Polestar's number of UK sales outlets will grow from nine to 17 over the next 18 months and cars will be sold from dedicated spaces alongside Volvo dealerships.

Lohscheller believes there will be very little sales cannibalisation. He is surprised and impressed by buyers' clear perception of Polestar as a distinct brand.

The company will "transition away" from its former network of 'Spaces' in large shopping centres.

Lohscheller believes the UK market, Polestar's biggest, is also more agile and adaptable than any other in Europe.

"You can get close to the customers here," said Lohscheller, "and if you need to change the way things are done, you can do it quickly."

The changes seem to be bearing fruit: in the fourth quarter of last year, UK Polestar orders doubled.

STATE OF ENGLISH ROADS 'NATIONAL EMBARRASSMENT'

THE DEPARTMENT FOR Transport (DfT) has blamed "decades of decline" under previous governments after MPs labelled England's roads a "national embarrassment" in a scathing new report.

Published by the Public Accounts Committee – a cross-party group of MPs who examine the value for money provided by government programmes – it found that the DfT is failing to take policy and the use of taxpayer funds "sufficiently seriously" when looking at the 183,000 miles of local roads across England. That equates to 98% of the total road network.

It said "the state of England's local roads is declining" yet "the DfT neither knows exactly how authorities spend its funding, as it is not ring-fenced, nor what it wants to achieve with it".

The report added that the DfT has insufficient knowledge of the condition of the local road network and that its approach to funding their maintenance is too focused on short-term repairs.

Responding to the report, the DfT told Autocar: "For far too long our roads have been left to crumble and this report has laid bare the result of the decades of decline we have inherited in our road infrastructure.

"That's why we're investing a record £1.6 billion for the coming year to help local authorities fix up to seven million more potholes.

"Road users are rightly frustrated by patchwork repairs, so we are also committed to multi-year funding settlements to enable councils to better maintain their road networks and avoid potholes forming in the first place."

The report comes after the National Audit Office last year reported that the government "does not know" whether £1.6bn of taxpayer money is actually making a difference to the state of English roads.

The National Audit Office said the DfT does not have a good enough understanding of the condition of local roads, nor does it allocate funding to local authorities "as effectively as possible".

It added that the DfT is not following up with councils to help them make the most of their "limited" funds and that it has not done so "for some years".

"DfT doesn't know how its funding is being spent"

SMART #6 TO RIVAL HOT MODEL 3 WITH 638BHP

New four-door saloon flagship will be the firm's quickest model to date

Smart's sleek #6 flagship will be unveiled later this year as the brand's quickest and most advanced model to date, packing reserves of more than 630bhp in its most potent form.

The rakish four-door saloon will be positioned as a rival to the Tesla Model 3, a car it will have a similar footprint to. It has been designed with a focus on range so will feature the slipperiest body of any Smart model to date.

Autocar has been told this will allow it to offer "well over 800km" (497 miles) of range in its most efficient form, although that figure is based on the generous Chinese CLTC test cycle. On the WLTP cycle used in Europe, it is expected to return a figure close to the Model 3 Long Range Rear-Wheel Drive's 436 miles.

The saloon, which is twinned with the Zeekr 007 and upcoming Polestar 5, will be shown for the first time in the second half of 2025 before reaching UK showrooms in early 2026.

While predominantly developed as an electric car, the #6 will also be offered with a plug-in hybrid drivetrain as part of a move to fill sales gaps in markets where EVs have yet to take off (see box, right).

Secrecy still surrounds the styling of the new saloon, which like all of Smart's current models has been designed by a team at Mercedes-Benz headed by Smart design boss Kai Sieber.

New #6 will have similar body surfacing to the #3 (far right) and #1

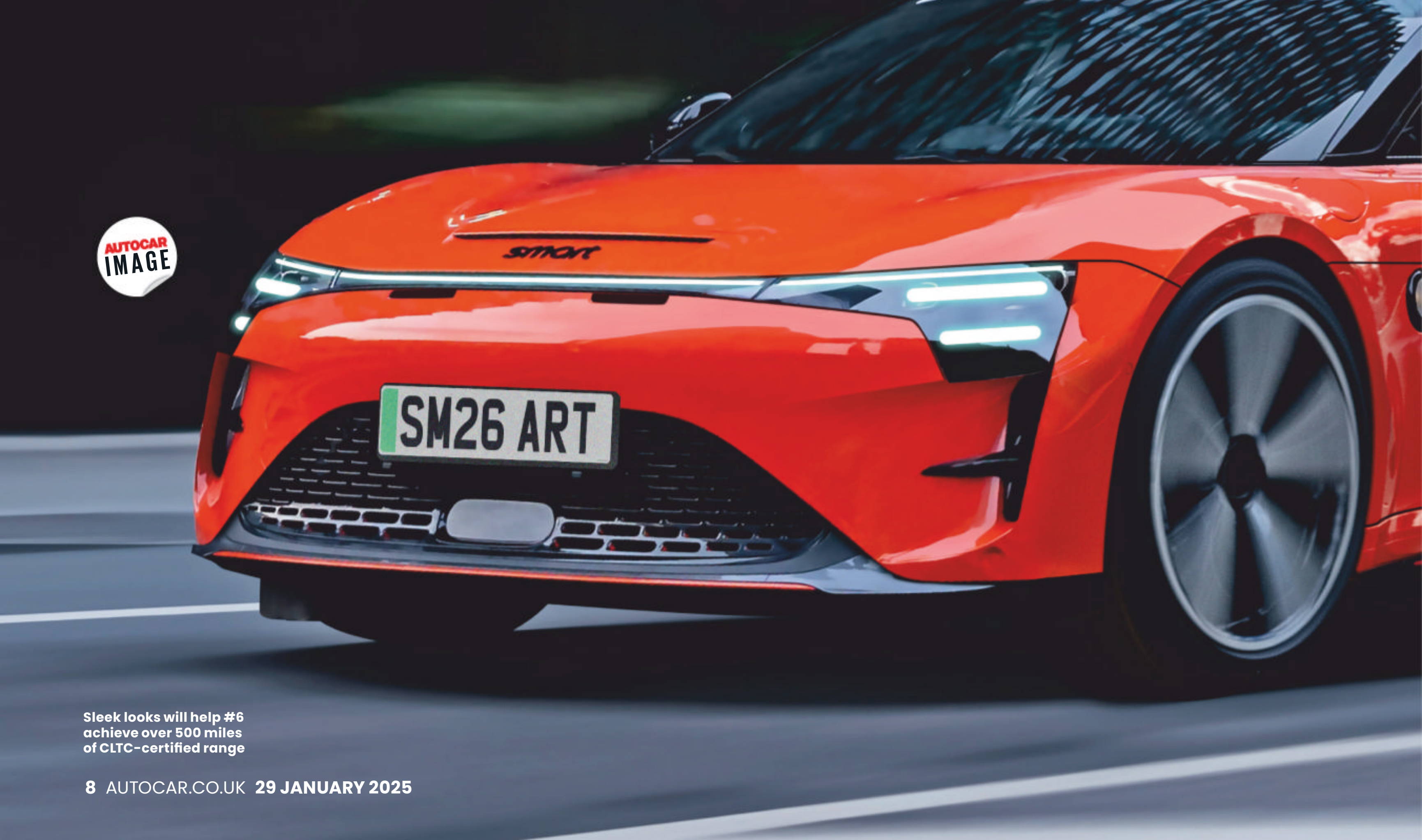
However, Autocar understands that it will adopt a distinctive raked roofline together with detailing and surfacing treatment similar to the #1, #3 and #5. Like those cars, the #6 will also feature frameless doors and wheels that range from 19in to 21in.

Smart's maiden saloon is based on the Geely-developed PMA2+ platform – a structure derived from the Chinese car maker's Sustainable Experience Architecture (SEA) for EVs that underpins models such as the Polestar 4.

PMA2+ can use 400V and 800V electric architectures – the latter of which is set to provide the #6 with a charging capability of up to 400kW. As with the #1, #3 and #5, it also forms the basis for both single-motor rear-wheel-drive and dual-motor four-wheel-drive powertrains.

Insiders at Smart's HQ in China suggest power outputs will be largely in line with those of the #5, with

"The Brabus version is expected to do 0-62mph in less than 3.5sec"



Sleek looks will help #6 achieve over 500 miles of CLTC-certified range

SMART NOW DOES PHEV TOO, STARTING WITH #5

Before the #6 arrives, the new #5 SUV will be the first Smart to be offered with a plug-in hybrid drivetrain in response to growing concerns about EV sales in some markets.

The move, confirmed by Chinese-based Smart officials, is a step-change for the Geely- and Mercedes-Benz-owned company, which previously committed to selling new Smart models with electric power only.

Asked if this set-up could come to Western markets, a Smart Europe spokesperson told Autocar the brand "cannot exclude any technological solution" as it battles with the "changing demands" of customers.

Technical details of the PHEV powertrain destined for the #5 and #6 remain under wraps, but it is thought to be a variant of the system fitted to the Geely Galaxy Starship 7 EM-i and Lynk&Co 07 EM-P. This is centred around a 161bhp 1.5-litre four-pot turbo petrol engine and a 215bhp electric motor. It is offered with 8.5kWh and 19.1kWh LFP batteries, for electric-only ranges of 34 and 75 miles on China's generous test cycle.

In other Lynk&Co models, the EM-P plug-in hybrid system is boosted to 585bhp by the addition of a second, 290bhp electric motor on the rear axle. That sets up the possibility of a hot Brabus-badged four-wheel-drive PHEV version of the #5 and #6.

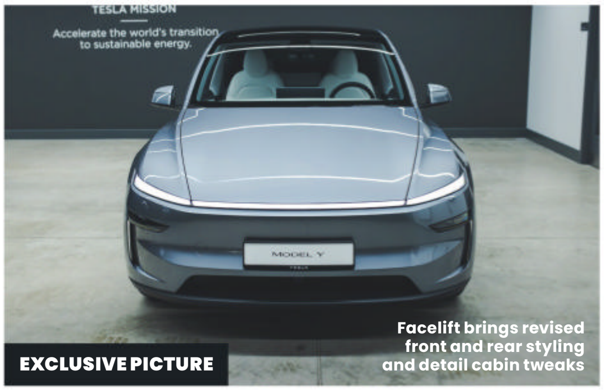
Upcoming #5 will be the first Smart to have a plug-in hybrid set-up

rear-wheel-drive models offering up to 335bhp and four-wheel-drive models boosted to 597bhp.

Heading the #6 range will be a hot Brabus model to challenge the Tesla Model 3 Performance. Packing four-wheel drive and up to 638bhp, it is expected to deliver 0-62mph in less than 3.5sec and a governed top speed of 124mph.

A choice of batteries will be offered: a 75kWh LFP unit for 400V rear-drive models or a 100kWh NMC pack for 800V rear- and four-wheel-drive models.

GREG KABLE



EXCLUSIVE PICTURE

Facelift brings revised front and rear styling and detail cabin tweaks

NEW £61K MODEL Y TO ARRIVE IN APRIL

THE FIRST UK examples of the facelifted Tesla Model Y will be priced from £60,990.

Arriving in April, the revised crossover will be sold initially in Launch Series trim only, which features all-wheel drive and a long-range battery. It offers a 353-mile WLTP range and a 0-60mph time of 4.1sec.

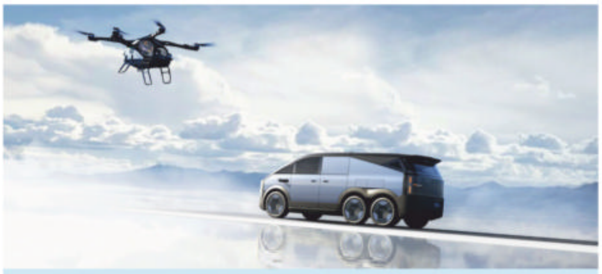
Regular long-range AWD models are expected later this year at a price above the current car's £51,990.

Performance and long-range RWD cars are in the works but an arrival date has not been set. For reference, the outgoing long-range RWD is the entry-level model and is priced from £46,990.

There are no initial plans for a seven-seat version to return.

Revealed earlier this month, the headline changes on the Model Y are new wraparound light bars at the front and rear and subtly reshaped bumpers.

A minor refresh inside has added a touchscreen in the rear. The indicator controls have also moved back to a conventional stalk rather than, as with the facelifted Model 3, being located on the steering wheel.



XPENG CLEAR FOR TAKE-OFF

The radical Xpeng AeroHT Land Aircraft Carrier – a six-wheeled truck with a built-in 'flying car' – is on track to begin mass production in 2026.

Its maker, Xpeng AeroHT, is a subsidiary of UK-bound Chinese electric car maker Xpeng Motors and has said it has already received more than 3000 "intent orders".

The 'mothership' EV will use a range-extender electric powertrain and will cost "less than $300,000" (£244k), co-founder Wang Tan told Autocar.

WHY CAR GIANTS STILL NEE

“No one firm can do it all” in transition to software-defined vehicles, claims Hyundai systems supplier

“I'll be egotistical and say we invented the term ‘software-defined vehicle’,” said Sonatus boss Jeffrey Chou with a laugh.

It's not entirely true – you can find versions of the term going back to the 1970s – but this American software engineer and entrepreneur was well placed to be among the first to see the ongoing shift.

As the automotive industry is transformed by the development of software-defined vehicles (cars designed around their computer systems, allowing for over-the-air updates and upgrades, in-car payment methods and advanced artificial intelligence systems), so technology firms have started to expand into it.

At this year's CES tech event in Las Vegas, there were big automotive presences from the likes of Amazon, LG, Sony and more, while Nvidia had a bespoke set-up at a nearby hotel.

There were also plenty of firms that have launched into automotive with staff and an approach from the tech industry.

Sonatus is one of those, and Chou believes there's a major opportunity for new players in the market.

“Software-defined technologies came out of data centres in the IT world,” he told Autocar. “It's the same value proposition for automotive as it has been for media, finance, retail and every other sector it has transformed. I mean, it's inevitable, right? Software-defined technologies will disrupt every industry.”

That's something Chou knows from his career, in which he has founded or worked for a number of tech start-ups that were eventually acquired by industry giants such as Cisco. Spotting that the automotive industry was ripe for software-driven disruption is why he and business partner Yu Fang founded Sonatus in 2018.

“When I was at Cisco, we built the first software-defined networking switch. So a lot of what we offer is what we've seen in the playbook before,” said Chou.

“One of the key enabling technologies that inspired software-defined services is connectivity. It started with connectivity in vehicles, just like it did in data centres. That happened in the late 1990s and sparked orchestration platforms and networks. If you look at the evolution, it's all there in automotive. It's the latest domino to fall.”

Chou's Sonatus company is a driving force behind software-defined vehicles

Electromod showcases Sonatus's Automator AI personalisation system

PORTAL AXLES FOR EXTREME AUDI OFF-ROADER

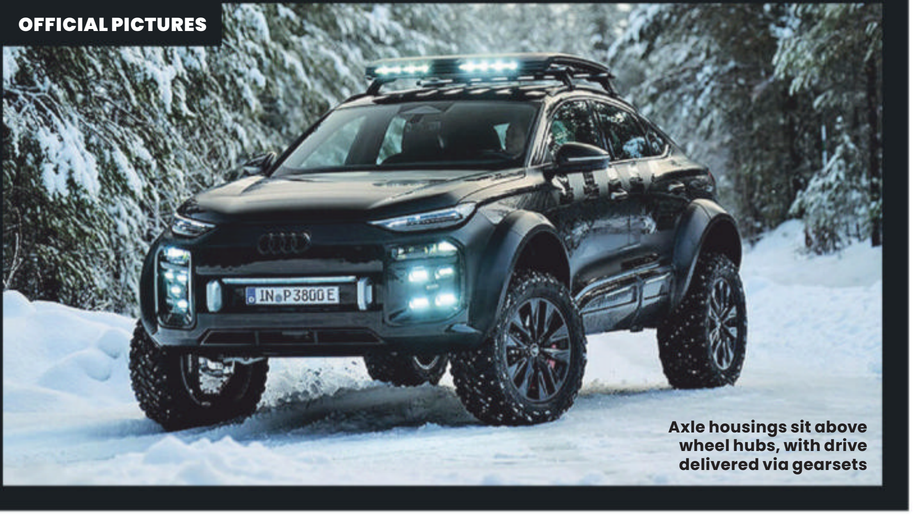
AUDI HAS REVEALED the Q6 E-tron Off-Road concept as a hardcore, go-anywhere version of its latest electric SUV.

Described as “Quattro redefined”, the bulked-up Q6 E-tron Sportback has been extensively modified for venturing into the wild, receiving a heavy visual makeover, a massive suspension lift and studded all-terrain tyres.

Full technical details remain confidential, but Audi has confirmed the concept is fitted with ground clearance-boosting portal axles, traditionally used by only the most extreme 4x4s.

There's a slim chance of a production version, but the concept could preview a revival of Audi's Allroad 4x4 sub-brand.

OFFICIAL PICTURES



Axle housings sit above wheel hubs, with drive delivered via gearsets

GETTY IMAGES

D HELP FROM TECH WORLD

“Software is different to traditional manufacturing, if you want to do it properly”

California-based Sonatus’s portfolio covers a broad range of areas, from developing in-car functions and systems to cloud-based and security services, all of which can be tailored to individual clients.

At CES, it highlighted a number of new software solutions that it was working on with a 1970 Ford Bronco electromod prototype that, among other things, could use facial-recognition technology to adjust seat settings and drive modes for individual family members. It even demonstrated an ‘if this, then that’ style app, allowing different settings to be applied when different people enter the car.

Don’t expect that service to be offered publicly in a Sonatus-branded package, though: recognising that car makers want to own their overall system packages, Sonatus has focused on addressing specific issues they need to solve.

“A lot of our first few generations of products were taking technologies that we built in the IT industry and adapting them for the automotive world,” said Chou. “We knew where to start and where to plant the right seeds to scale the platform and where the value propositions were. One of our advantages as a company is that we’ve seen it before and delivered it before.”

The Hyundai Motor Group was the first car maker to use Sonatus’s ethernet technology, for some of its in-vehicle connectivity systems. One key selling point for switching to modern connected cars was the prospect of actually saving money on in-car systems.

“Saving money is always one of their top things,” confirmed Chou.

But while Sonatus identified a gap in the current market, you might wonder how long that gap will be there, especially as every car firm insists that it’s currently becoming a software maker and taking that tech in-house.

“Of course every car manufacturer is doing it all themselves,” said Chou, laughing. “Our biggest competitors are internal development teams. But the software-defined vehicle is such a wide topic that no one company can do it all. There are opportunities for suppliers; you just have to find the right answer.”

Chou believes it comes down to the inherent differences between developing a car and developing software.

He noted that traditional manufacturing is “very silo-based”, explaining: “[Car makers] have an ADAS system and a suspension system and body control and a steering wheel, and they write out specs and send them to suppliers. Software is different, if you want to do it properly: it’s horizontal technology, not vertical. It spans across those silos.”

JAMES ATTWOOD

FIRST LOOK AT NEXT CX-5

MAZDA WILL LAUNCH the third generation of its CX-5 SUV next year.

The current car, its best-seller in the UK, has sold more than 62,000 examples here since being launched in 2018.

Now prototypes of its successor have been spotted testing on public roads in California.

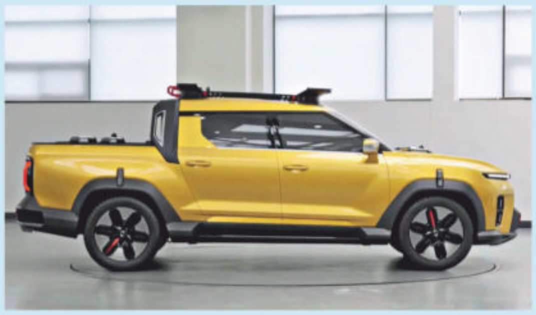
New headlights and grille suggest Mazda will bring the CX-5’s design closer to the larger new CX-60 and CX-80.

In addition, the test cars appear to have shorter overhangs and a longer wheelbase than the current CX-5, suggesting a push to increase interior space.

SPY SHOTS

STYLISH ELECTRIC KGM TRIO ON THE WAY

Korean brand KGM (formerly Ssangyong) will expand its UK line-up with three new electric models in the next two years. The O100 four-wheel-drive pick-up truck is due to arrive later this year, followed in 2026 by the KR10, a crossover close in size to the current Korando. The F100, a larger SUV with styling reminiscent of Toyota’s 2006 FJ Cruiser, will come later.



OFFICIAL PICTURES

BMW iX OVERHAULED TO BOOST POWER, RANGE

Extensive revisions give flagship EV up to 659bhp and 435 miles of range

The BMW iX, the Munich firm's tech-laden electric flagship, has received a major update with substantial power upgrades and an increase in efficiency that boosts its range to 435 miles.

While the Audi Q8 E-tron and Volvo EX90 rival has received only a minor styling makeover, the changes under the skin are more significant. Product manager Marisa Hammersen said BMW has "worked hard to really optimise the efficiency in every area we could". As an example of that, she cited the use of new headlights that require less energy when illuminated.

The German marque has revamped the electric motors with an improved silicon-carbide inverter to reduce power losses, while retuning the drive system and working on the electronics to boost efficiency. There are also new drive modes, including settings that offer extra performance and help to maximise efficiency.

As before, the iX will be offered in three variants, each with a dual-motor all-wheel-drive powertrain. To highlight the promised performance improvements, the iX 40 and iX 50 have been succeeded by the 45 and 60, while the hot M60 has spawned an even more potent M70.

The entry-level iX 45 produces 402bhp – an increase of 80bhp – and 516lb ft of torque. Using a new 94.8kWh battery, it offers a range of up to 374 miles. The iX 60 produces 536bhp and 564lb ft, and a new 109.1kWh battery boosts its range to that 435-mile headline figure – a chunky increase of 53 miles on its predecessor.

The M70 offers 659bhp and 811lb ft of torque and is powered by a bespoke performance-honed

GENESIS BECOMES EV-ONLY IN UK – FOR NOW AT LEAST

GENESIS WILL BECOME an electric-only brand in the UK for the foreseeable future after the last combustion models in the market were scrapped.

The petrol and diesel variants of the G70 Shooting Brake and GV70 SUV have joined the G70 saloon and G80 SUV in being pulled from the UK line-up. All four can now be bought from stock only.

However, the brand has promised to "bolster" its line-up with new hybrid models "in the future", without confirming an exact date. It is understood they won't arrive this year so the Korean brand will sell only EVs in the UK for now.

Its line-up for 2025 will include an updated Electrified G80, with extra range and an extended wheelbase, due in April; an updated Electrified GV70, also with more range, from the summer; and a restyled GV60.

The brand has also said new EVs are on the way "in the coming years", such as a production version of the GV60 Magma performance EV.

UK brand director Jonny Miller said: "We're committed to responding to customer and market feedback and we're confident our transition to an electric range, joined by future hybrid models, is the right direction."

On why Genesis was not going exclusively electric, he said: "Our commitment is to a rich and varied portfolio, which includes premium electrified and high-performance drivetrains alongside exciting new segment entries."

Revised GV60 is one of at least three new 2025 EVs

New line-up comprises 402bhp 45, 536bhp 60 and 659bhp M70 models

108.9kWh battery, giving it a range of 373 miles. While the iX 45 can charge at speeds of 175kW, both higher-spec models can achieve 195kW.

The batteries on all three variants feature a new cell technology that, claims BMW, offers around 30% more usable energy content. The firm has worked to optimise the battery pre-conditioning to enable it to reach peak charging speeds faster. The iX can also be charged at 22kW on an AC connection and it has a new heat pump as part of its efficiency push.

Hammersen said "we put a major focus on the driving dynamics" and the chassis and suspension have been tuned for each model to better match their respective power outputs. The iX continues to sit on steel rather than air suspension, with work done on the dampers to make the vehicle more stable during cornering. Buyers will have a choice of 21in and 23in wheels.

The flagship M70 also features active rear steering, improved ride control and M Sport brakes as standard.

Design tweaks to the grille are intended to make it less prominent

Across the range, the key exterior change is a revamped version of the large kidney grille, in this case a panel that houses many of the sensors for the car's advanced driver assistance systems. The new design features vertical line elements that run through both the kidney grille and the LED headlights and that, said Hammersen, are intended to "reduce the dominance of the kidney".

Inside, cars fitted with the M Sport package gain new multifunction seats and an M steering wheel, among other styling elements.

The revamped iX will continue to be produced at the firm's Dingolfing plant in Germany and deliveries are due to begin in the first half of this year.

UK pricing had not been finalised as Autocar went to press, although the M Sport trim will continue to be offered in the UK alongside the new Sport and M Performance options.

JAMES ATTWOOD

PUNCHY A290 HAS PRICE TO MATCH

The Alpine A290 has gone on sale in the UK, with prices ranging from £33,500 to a lofty £38,500. That means the electric hot hatch costs £10,505 more than the cheapest version of the closely related Renault 5 and £4505 more than the top-rung variant.

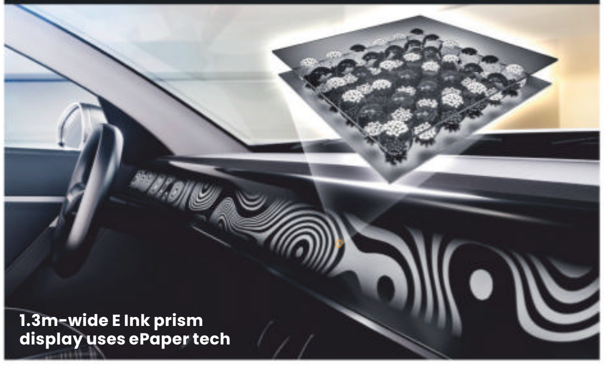
Standard kit for a basic GT-trim A290, which features a 52kWh battery and a 178bhp motor, includes a 10in infotainment touchscreen, heated seats and 19in alloy wheels.

The range is topped by the limited-run Premiere launch edition, which at £38,500 includes a 215bhp motor.

UK customer deliveries of the A290 will begin in April.

Next big thing

JESSE CROSSE



1.3m-wide E Ink prism display uses ePaper tech

CAN HIGH-TECH DISPLAYS BOOST FEELGOOD FACTOR?

THE 2025 CONSUMER Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas flagged up how radical car interiors might become – and sooner rather than later.

Continental showed its Emotional Cockpit concept, which combines high-tech electronics with displays framed by Swarovski crystal, a high-quality cut glass from Austrian firm Swarovski Mobility. A floating 12.3 TFT display beneath the centre of the dash is set beneath a transparent crystal surface and forms the control element for both driver and front passenger.

The TFT technology has full-array local dimming technology (FALD), which controls the backlighting. FALD is used in LED TVs and divides the LED backlights into zones that can be dimmed in certain areas (hence 'local'). LEDs in the brighter areas can be turned up and those in darker areas turned down to create a more vivid image.

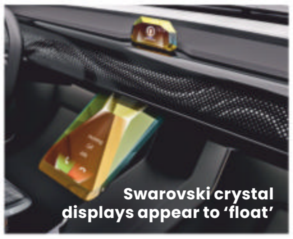
In the dashboard itself, there's a small 'Widget Crystal', described as an interaction surface for an AI assistant and interactive widgets that give information on things like weather and location. The 3.5in Widget Crystal is powered by advanced micro-LED technology, which is super-intense but has yet to find its way into mainstream domestic TVs because of the huge cost.

The crystal casings of the displays are designed to create the impression of an image floating inside them and Continental believes there's a strong business case for this. According to its user experience team, end users and car makers are both placing greater importance on the emotional attachment owners have to a car.

With that theme in mind, Continental has also revealed its E Ink display, which substitutes ePaper technology for backlit LED displays. Essentially, ePaper is the kind of thing used by Kindle and other tablet readers to get closer to the look of a printed page.

In this case, the technology has been developed by specialist firm E Ink. Here, it is used for a 1.3m-wide, 4cm-tall E Ink prism display that spans the width of the dashboard. Initial prototypes are black and white but the plan is to introduce full colour.

The display is intended to visually enhance the vehicle interior, enable personalisation and provide essential information for driving the car. The display shown at CES consumes small amounts of power only when switching from one image to the next. Like its e-reader counterparts, the display doesn't rely on backlighting like LED screens but instead reflects light like paper. Because of that, it can display images, graphics and text permanently without consuming any power, although that suggests in low light or darkness some illumination will be needed.



Swarovski crystal displays appear to 'float'

GOV'T FUNDING SQUEEZE PUTS ROADS ON BACK BURNER

With planned road upgrade projects shelved, are tolls the way forward?

Twelve years after it was given the go-ahead and five years since construction started, the new 0.9-mile Silvertown Tunnel beneath the Thames that links Silvertown in east London to the Greenwich Peninsula will open on 7 April. The announcement by Transport for London (TfL) is a rare piece of good news at a time when, elsewhere in the country, many proposed road schemes are being axed in the face of cutbacks or opposition.

Shortly after taking office in July last year, the Labour government scrapped the A27 upgrade and the controversial A303 Stonehenge tunnel scheme that had cost taxpayers £166 million in development.

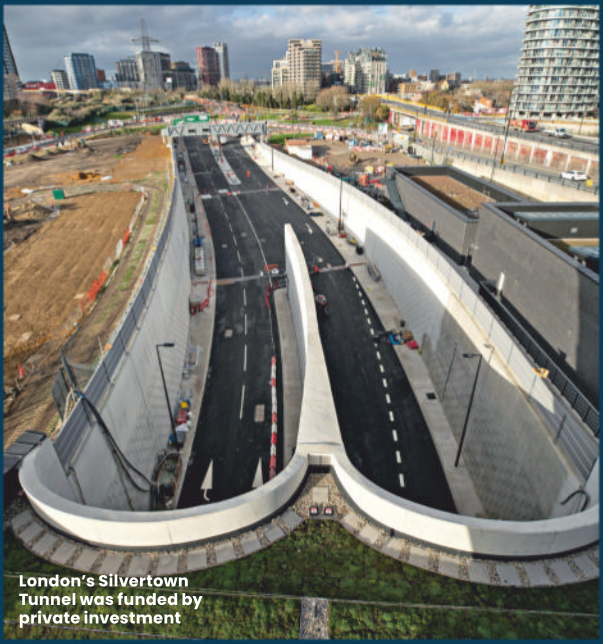
Then, in the Autumn Budget in October, it axed a further five National Highways projects – a decision taken because, according to then transport secretary Louise Haigh, they were "unaffordable".

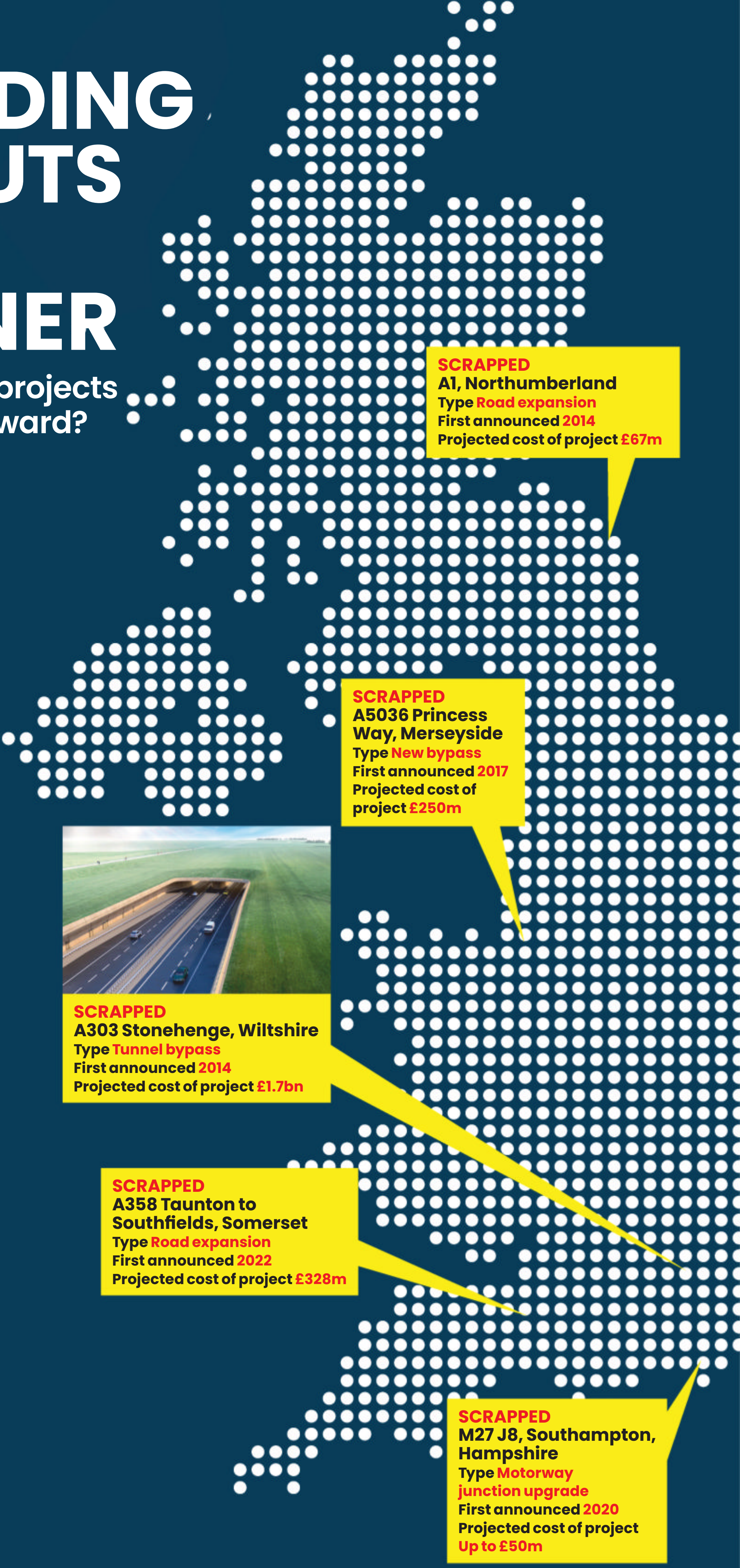
The previous government had said the A1 Morpeth to Ellingham scheme – one of the five axed – would be funded from money saved by scrapping the northern leg of HS2. However, with the new government facing what it claimed was a £22 billion "black hole" in the public finances, it had other plans.

Against this backdrop, the completion of the Silvertown Tunnel seems like a miracle – except that the crossing's £2.2bn cost has been funded by the private sector. TfL says this will be repaid over the next 25 years by tolls of up to £4.

While this toll-based model has secured the future of the tunnel, major road projects funded instead by taxpayers remain vulnerable to cancellation when government finances are squeezed.

Economists, such as Bradshaw Advisory's Matthew Brighty, warn that putting UK roads to the back of the funding queue risks


London's Silvertown Tunnel was funded by private investment


SCRAPPED
A1, Northumberland
Type Road expansion
First announced 2014
Projected cost of project £67m

SCRAPPED
A5036 Princess Way, Merseyside
Type New bypass
First announced 2017
Projected cost of project £250m

SCRAPPED
A303 Stonehenge, Wiltshire
Type Tunnel bypass
First announced 2014
Projected cost of project £1.7bn

SCRAPPED
A358 Taunton to Southfields, Somerset
Type Road expansion
First announced 2022
Projected cost of project £328m

SCRAPPED
M27 J8, Southampton, Hampshire
Type Motorway junction upgrade
First announced 2020
Projected cost of project Up to £50m

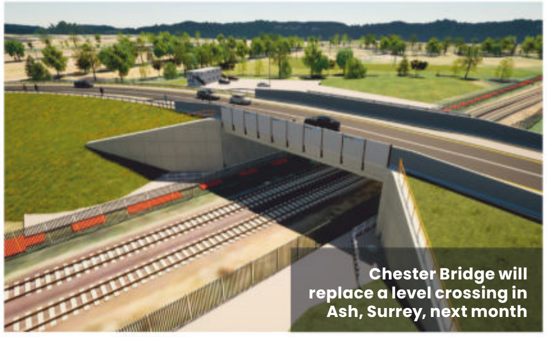
BRIDGE BUILT… AFTER 130-YEAR CAMPAIGN

While the overall pace of road improvements may be slowing, one set of campaigners has waited over a century for a project to be completed.

For 130 years, residents of the village of Ash, between Aldershot and Guildford, have been campaigning for a bridge to replace a level crossing that takes traffic on the A323 over the Gatwick-Reading railway line.

Currently, the crossing is closed for up to 25 minutes in every hour, which results in significant traffic delays.

The new bridge, which will open in February, has cost £19 million. It will be named the Chester Bridge in memory of former local benefactor Henry Chester, who in 1895 was among the first to campaign for it.



Chester Bridge will replace a level crossing in Ash, Surrey, next month

harming the government's plans to grow the economy.

Brighty said: "If Labour wants to grow the economy and attract investment, it is essential to commit to long-term road infrastructure projects.

"Investing in improving our outdated roads and tackling rising congestion before it gets worse will boost business, productivity, connectivity and unlock economic potential. The strategic road network needs real investment."

However, the level of investment Brighty believes is required has, in recent years, not materialised or has been spent ineffectively. Every five years, the government's road investment strategy (RIS) sets out where cash will be spent. The most recent, RIS2, which covers the period to March 2025, pledged to spend £27.4bn on the strategic road network, including committing £14.1bn to 69 road enhancement projects. However, around £3.5bn of the budget was clawed back and the number of projects reduced.

The National Audit Office subsequently reported that the spending programme would deliver fewer projects and at far higher cost than expected. As a result of delays caused by the parliamentary inquiry that followed and the change of government, implementation of the strategy's successor, RIS3, which covers the period April 2025 to March 2030, has been delayed until the government's spending review in June.

Explaining this delay, future of roads minister Lilian Greenwood said the strategic road network is "an economic engine [that] needs our attention and demands a long-term plan".

She added: "In order to shape that future, we need to take time to ensure we have the right programme, taking the opportunity provided by the Treasury Spending Review in spring to allow us to build a road investment strategy that will be better placed to invest and deliver for the long term."

Until then, and to ensure at least some projects remain on track, an 'interim roads settlement' for 2025-26 has been established. This includes up to £5m for work on the A75, as well as unspecified amounts for projects on the A47.

Meanwhile, National Highways has set aside £347m to fund a "pipeline of future projects" that includes more than 30 major road schemes that were originally intended for consideration in RIS3 but have now been pushed back, possibly to RIS4 (April 2030 to March 2035). They include improvements to the M1, M6, A1 and A5 in the north of England, the M11, A11 and A12 to the east, and the A303, A3, A27 and A38 to the south-west.

Despite cash being set aside, all of these projects are still up in the air. A spokesperson said: "These schemes remain uncommitted, with no guarantee they'll be taken forward for further development work."

JOHN EVANS

SCRAPPED
A47, Vauxhall roundabout, Great Yarmouth
Type Major roundabout upgrade
First announced 2017
Projected cost of project £50m

SCRAPPED
A27, Arundel, West Sussex
Type Bypass
First announced 2020
Projected cost of project £320m

Grapevine

MARK TISSHAW

Kia design boss Karim Habib wants to make mainstream desirable

"WE OFTEN DISCUSS as a design team what the EV3 would look like with the old Kia badge on it and the car just would not look the same."

Kia design director Karim Habib credits the firm's new logo and accompanying updated branding as a major enabling factor in the recent success of the company, along with the cars themselves, of course.

"Having a new badge at the same time as new technology [with EVs] and new design plays a huge role," he says. "It's a subconscious impact, the filter through which you see things. And the work done on brand perception also influences this. We as designers can then accentuate that shift."

This process is well under way. Having spent almost two decades dragging itself into the pack, Kia's latest cars are now among the most visually interesting and desirable in the mainstream.

Habib, whose CV includes many years at BMW, is proud of making mainstream desirable again and he believes good design shouldn't be reserved exclusively for premium buyers.

He says: "As most of my experience has been at premium brands, there's something nice to try and make something 'normal'. Something people can aspire to without having to spend too much, or sacrifice something else for it. That's what design should do.

"When I lived in Munich, we had some new trams come. They were so different. It's still just the train, but the experience was so much better: the lighting, seating, the airiness, roominess. That's good industrial design."

Kia CEO Ho-sung Song is a previous subject of this column (18 September 2024) and his informality is notable for a car company boss when you meet him. Habib credits Song for allowing Kia designers "to try and fail, and give us room for manoeuvre. That's important for designers. Otherwise, it's tough to try something new."

Kia's next horizon is an expansion into vans with its sharp-looking PBV range. Habib accepts that vans aren't typically bought for the way they look but believes there are companies that will choose them based on design to "symbolise something about your business".

Back in the present, the EV3 is a good choice for Habib to illustrate how quickly Kia's designs are evolving: it will ultimately replace the Niro EV, yet the cars are night and day in the desirability stakes. They look a decade apart, rather than two years.

> **"Sometimes I worry if we are going too far. But it's important"**

"Sometimes I worry if we're going too far," he says. "But it's important to make your mark. If you're building a new brand for the long term, you have to break the mould first and then reform around that new mould. Hopefully it lasts and becomes more sustainable."

GETTY IMAGES

UK JAGUAR DEALERSHIPS GO INTO SURVIVAL MODE

Approved used cars are all they can offer until new EV arrives in 2026

Jags have been shifted from showrooms to the approved used car park

JAGUAR
LOOKERS
Service

Jaguar has sought to reassure potential customers that it is still business as usual, despite the brand now being on a hiatus from selling new cars in the UK.

At the unveiling of its new brand identity in November last year, managing director Rawdon Glover confirmed Jaguar would effectively take a year off in its home market ahead of the arrival of its all-new electric luxury GT in summer 2026, adding that, as a result, its UK retail network would be "significantly reduced".

He didn't contradict reports that the network may eventually number only around 20 dealerships – 60 fewer than just a few years ago – placed in "the right locations".

This new strategy has raised concerns about the firm's commitment to support existing Jaguar owners. But a company spokesperson told Autocar: "Even though the Jaguar brand is changing, our commitment to all of our current clients remains the same." They added that the company still counted 101 repair sites and 72 retailer partners across the UK, with large stocks of approved used cars.

In spite of these assurances, the immediate impression on the ground is of a brand in retreat.

For example, at two previously well-established Jaguar dealerships that Autocar visited, the leaping cat branding had been removed and only a limited number of approved used cars were on display.

In fact, at one of the dealerships, Autocar was told the Jaguar showroom would soon be demolished and replaced with one dedicated to JLR sibling brand Land Rover.

Until then, though, the employee said, the dealership remained committed to Jaguar, and there were many more approved used cars in group stocks.

He added that a used Jaguar purchased from the dealership would be serviced by qualified technicians and have its warranty honoured.

"Jaguars share many systems and parts with the Land Rovers and Range Rovers that we also sell, so sourcing spares and maintaining used cars into the future will not be an issue," he promised.

At both dealerships that Autocar visited, sales staff claimed that since Jaguar had announced it would stop selling new cars in the UK, interest in approved used cars had grown, causing prices to rise.

However, vehicle valuation specialist Cap HPI reports that the fortunes of used Jaguars are mixed.

Dylan Setterfield, its head of forecast strategy, said: "JLR's year-on-year performance is slightly weaker than the overall market's, largely due to the ageing line-up, with current models ranging from six to 11 years old, most of which are overdue for replacement.

"However, there have been signs of improvement in recent months, with residual values stabilising after underperforming earlier this year.

"The earlier dip may be linked to uncertainty around the brand's short-term future. For now, franchise dealers are relying on used car sales to sustain demand."

JOHN EVANS

BAG YOURSELF A BARGAIN JAG

This chart shows how the values of used Jaguar models at three years and 36,000 miles performed between July and December 2024, compared with the overall performance of their respective model- and fuel-type markets.

The best performer was the F-Type P300 R-Dynamic Coupé, outpacing the petrol sports car sector by 8.5%.

In contrast, the values of diesel F-Paces and XFs underperformed their sectors by 7.4% and 6.5%, which makes them good value for money.

Model and fuel type	Derivative	Value in Jul 2024	Value in Dec 2024	Change in value	Overall market change	Difference to market change
E-Pace petrol	2.0 P250 R-Dynamic S	£23,850	£23,150	-2.9%	-1.9%	-1.0%
E-Pace plug-in hybrid	1.5 P300e R-Dynamic S	£25,600	£25,100	-2.0%	-2.9%	+0.9%
E-Pace diesel	2.0 D200 R-Dynamic S	£23,250	£22,550	-3.0%	-0.4%	-2.6%
F-Pace petrol	2.0 P250 R-Dynamic S AWD	£28,950	£28,350	-2.1%	-1.9%	-0.2%
F-Pace plug-in hybrid	2.0 P400e R-Dynamic S AWD	£31,100	£29,900	-3.9%	-2.9%	-1.0%
F-Pace diesel	2.0 D200 R-Dynamic S AWD	£27,850	£25,700	-7.7%	-0.4%	-7.3%
I-Pace	EV400 HSE 90kWh (11kW Charger)	£21,150	£21,350	+1.0%	0.0%	+1.0%
XE petrol	2.0 P250 R-Dynamic SE	£19,550	£19,550	0.0%	-1.1%	+1.1%
XE diesel	2.0 D200 R-Dynamic S	£17,400	£17,650	+1.4%	-0.4%	+1.8%
XF petrol saloon	2.0 P250 R-Dynamic SE	£17,650	£18,500	+4.8%	-1.1%	+5.9%
XF diesel saloon	2.0 D200 R-Dynamic S	£15,350	£14,200	-7.5%	-1.0%	-6.5%
F-Type Coupé	2.0 P300 R-Dynamic	£27,200	£29,300	+7.7%	-0.8%	+8.5%
F-Type Convertible	2.0 P300 R-Dynamic	£28,900	£28,000	-3.1%	-5.5%	+2.4%

MY WEEK IN CARS

Steve Cropley

Henry Williams is likely to see more of Caterham and Morgan fan Cropley

MONDAY
If you asked me last week to name a European car leader truly happy in their skin, I'd have been pushed. Carlos Tavares has gone and the others fight terminal-sounding crises. But this week I give you Michael Lohscheller, recently appointed boss of Polestar, who swept into London to tour his biggest market. I remember Lohscheller as the guarded leader of Opel, speaking with forensic care so we hacks understood how Vauxhall could be a century-old British icon with every car made in Germany. Revealing plans this week to launch a slew of advanced Polestar models – using improved sales methods to swell volume 30% – sounded an easier gig, and Michael's wide smile showed he thought so too.

WEDNESDAY AM
I teamed up with fellow hack and Autocar contributor Mark Smyth to visit a couple of his favourite neighbourhood car businesses – first the long-established Williams family car dealership (led nowadays by fourth-generation Henry Williams) and then nearby EV experts Fellten (formerly Zero EV), whose grasp of auto electrification runs ahead of anyone I know. Williams started with horses and carts in the 1800s but it specialises today in Caterhams and Morgans. I went to scratch a Caterham itch but departed with twin itches (the second for a classic Plus Eight). Relief will take time; luckily, Henry expects customers to decide slowly. Meanwhile, Williams is a lovely 'destination' dealership, and I'll be a regular.

Russell Hayes' new book, Alpine French Speed & Spirit, is captivating

chapter six
Winning with Renault:
Alpine Sports Prototypes
Renault
elf
4
Renault Alpine V6
TISSOT
MICHELIN

> **"Never compete with anyone else; always do what's expected"**

WEDNESDAY PM
Half a mile away, fast-expanding Fellten – led by co-founder and CEO Chris Hazell – has an amazing grip on advancing EV technology. They're best known for turnkey EV conversions for classics (Mini, Defender, Porsche 964) but they also build batteries for many bespoke applications, not just cars, and have a thriving education arm to help people understand EVs and maybe even mend them. Most impressive to me was a large, containerised power bank they've invented called Charge Qube, populated by 'second-life' EV batteries that can store up to 450kWh of power drawn from the mains or generated by solar or wind turbines. One of these can be trucked to any convenient site to recharge cars or vans up to a dozen at a time. This 16-person company has much more to teach us, and I'm going back there too.

THURSDAY
Over the Cotswolds to Matt Prior's Oxfordshire abode, to record our My Week In Cars podcast that will accompany this mag. It struck me how expert we've all become at assessing the 'driving language' of others on the road: as I studied people scything through a large roundabout (while I queued to do the same), it was remarkable how wide were the spectra of their moods and their competence. It made me take my own favourite car-survival rules out of the notional glovebox and give them a polish: never compete with anyone else; always do what's expected.

FRIDAY
In our house, new books arrive regularly around Christmas and my January birthday, so it has taken me a few weeks to digest Russell Hayes' 500-page masterwork for Palawan Press on the design, production and racing history of Alpine. This volume has at least 1000 photographs, most of which I've never seen before. So rich is Alpine's 70-year history, and so compelling the story of its founder, Jean Rédélé, that my old strawberry tart swelled at the thought of my own A110, ready in the garage. The book also made it clear in my mind that Alpine's owners must guard its future carefully. Hayes' book costs a solid £400, or you can pay £1000-plus for a leather-bound copy, but the superb writing and research make it literally the best means of getting close to a wonderful marque.

AND ANOTHER THING

Funny how the past creeps up without warning. Leafing through Nick Hull's book Coventry Connections, written to mark 50 years of car design at Coventry University, I found a 1996 pic of myself sitting in the cockpit buck of a concept called LSC, soon to be the Ariel Atom. My task was to investigate whether drivers of a fuller figure would fit and the point was proven.

GET IN TOUCH
steve.cropley@haymarket.com

PRIOR CONVICTION

Matt Prior

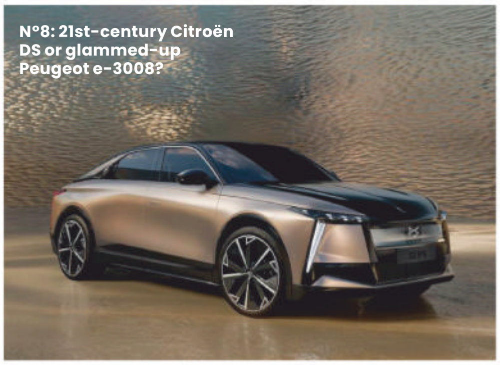
If you thought that DS was optimistic in believing it was a rival to premium brands such as BMW and Mercedes-Benz, I wonder what you made of the news (Autocar, 22 January) that it would in future like to become "the Louis Vuitton of the automotive industry", rubbing shoulders with Bentley and Rolls-Royce.

Let's take it seriously for a moment. DS design director Thierry Métroz acknowledges that this is a "dream", that it could take the brand another 10 years to achieve (on top of the 10 for which it has existed in its present form) and that it ultimately might never get there.

I'll be amazed if it does – and it won't do so by taking existing Stellantis platforms and tweaking them a bit, no matter how much the interiors, like that of the new N°8 crossover, are "more like Bentley than our German competitors" and regardless of how many key parts are changed. Pushing back windscreens and lowering rooflines won't be particularly persuasive.

True luxury is also territory never before occupied by a DS – not even one of the most striking cars in existence, the original Citroën DS19 of 1955. That's pretty old history, it's true, but if they thought it didn't matter, they wouldn't have reused the DS name in the first place.

When new, the DS19 cost £150 more than other Citroën models, at over £1400. That turned out to be too expensive for many buyers in its home market, yet it wasn't even near luxury pricing. The Bentley Continental of the day cost £3295 and the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud £3395, off the peg. By the time they had been to a coachbuilder, they could cost much more.



N°8: 21st-century Citroën DS or glammed-up Peugeot e-3008?

The DS19 was never in that sphere. It was advertised as "one of the world's most advanced cars" at the same time as a Rolls-Royce was being marketed as "the best car in the world".

Could a modern DS be one of the world's most advanced cars? Perhaps, but even if DS were, say, the first brand within the Stellantis group to be given the newest battery or motor technology, it would have to offer a tremendous advantage, of the sort that's harder to come by today, to cut through.

Besides, would the average car buyer even know, remember or care that the original DS was about new technology? What they would do is remember the way it looked. It's a unique, beautiful and in some ways still futuristic shape 70 years on. You don't have to be a car nerd to know and appreciate the design.

> **"Would the average car buyer even know, remember or care?"**

It strikes me as odd, then, for Métroz to bang on about interior materials or "an attractive design with a lot of character" as DS makes a car that, while making a couple of tiny nods to the original, doesn't have overtly identifiable cues, stance or lines, nor its impossible elegance.

The N°8 doesn't look to me like a 21st-century DS19. You might disagree. But if I'd been shown it without badges and asked who it was made by, I'd have answered: "Haven't a clue, mate."

To avoid retro cues is clearly deliberate. As Citroën design chief Pierre Leclercq said last week about the brand potentially reprising the 2CV: "The things you remember from Citroën is not especially that you want to redo the shape of the vehicles that have been good."

That's laudable enough, because car designers like to design new things. But are new things what customers want to buy? Keeping shapes but changing philosophy seems a safer bet. Take the Land Rover Defender, Fiat 500 and Mini: models that spent time out of production and don't do the same things they started out doing but are easily identifiable as modern iterations of decades-old designs. Entering this arena, too, is the Renault 5. It won a couple of big awards recently, but what will please Renault most is that nearly 10,000 examples left French showrooms last month.

Perhaps I'm exposing the reason why I don't run a car company. But if I intended to restart the DS brand and wanted to push it as far upmarket as I could, I think the first thing I'd do is actually make a new DS.

GET IN TOUCH
matthew.prior@haymarket.com

A skilful reinterpretation of this unique shape would inspire sales, reckons Prior

RACING LINES

Damien Smith

Life in red begins at 40 for seven-time F1 champ Hamilton

"There are some days that you know you'll remember forever and today, my first as a Ferrari driver, is one of those days," said Lewis Hamilton last week. Dressed sharply in a dark double-breasted suit with a long coat draped over his shoulders and snapped outside Enzo Ferrari's famous old office at Fiorano in front of an F40 (still the embodiment of automotive perfection), he sure looked the part.

"I've been lucky enough to have achieved things in my career I never thought possible," continued the seven-time Formula 1 world champion and 105-time grand prix winner, "but part of me has always held on to that dream of racing in red. I couldn't be happier to realise that dream today. Today we start a new era in the history of this iconic team, and I can't wait to see what story we will write together."

Neither can we.

A FAST START

Beyond the photocall, Hamilton spent last week in Ferrari induction mode at Maranello, soaking up his first direct contact with the team that will provide his fresh start this year. He was also due to experience his first laps in a red car – a 2023 model, because of F1's strict limitations on testing. Perhaps more vital will have been the virtual mileage he will have logged on the simulator, where access to the 2025 design remains unlimited. The time spent with the engineering team will also have been of high value – probably more than his meetings with senior management, who included Piero Ferrari.

These are crucial days for Hamilton if his Ferrari stint is to fly. He joins the team, having turned 40 this month, on the back of his worst season in F1. Despite two wins that ended a drought dating back to 2021, he finished only seventh in the standings and was comprehensively outperformed across the year by Mercedes-AMG team-mate George Russell. The evidence suggests that he is past his peak, and if that's so, he must quickly win over his new team and find a balance that he can live with in the new Ferrari, from a generation of F1 car that he has struggled to tame.

> **"Dismissing him as a spent force would be folly"**

Hamilton needs a positive start to set the tone on his Ferrari tenure, from a team that has been centred on Charles Leclerc for six years, and to keep the famously voracious Italian media off his back. A surprise first-time-out win, much like Nigel Mansell's in Brazil back in 1989, would be just the ticket.

THE OLD GOAT BLEAT

Dismissing Hamilton as a spent force would be folly. Don't forget his striking comeback drives in Las Vegas and the Abu Dhabi finale. Yes, they came from low grid spots during a season in which a man with a record 104 pole positions to his name struggled to conjure the old magic on Saturdays. And yes, in Leclerc he will face a team-mate widely considered F1's current benchmark on one-lap pace. But this is Hamilton: he has spent his career defying the critics and will back himself to do so again.

Saudi businessman beat full-time pros to win the Dakar – amazing stuff

Whatever happens, Hamilton's place as one of F1's greatest is assured. He belongs in a line that begins with Fangio and runs through Moss, Clark, Stewart, Lauda, Prost, Senna and Schumacher (and now also includes Verstappen). But if he does unlock performance and at least put himself into the conversation about a record eighth title, his status will be enhanced again.

I don't really go in for GOAT talk. Deciding on that through comparisons of eras that might as well have played out on different planets is a fraught exercise. Nevertheless, Hamilton's career stats put him officially at the top. If he can now triumph against the odds this late in the game and end another drought for the most illustrious team of them all… well, if he starts to bleat every now and then, you will know why.

TOYOTA'S PRIVATE AFFAIR

Ford and Dacia missed out on maiden victories on the Dakar Rally. For both, it was always a tall order on the two-week epic adventure that is a challenge like nothing else. Still, bronze for Ford in the assured hands of two-time DTM champion Mattias Ekström made some amends for Carlos Sainz Sr taking an early bath. Likewise, five-time Dakar winner Nasser Al-Attiyah was frustrated to be limited to fourth for Prodrive-run Dacia but fared far better than WRC legend Sébastien Loeb.

At the top, Toyota took the spoils – but not with the Hilux it had planned on. Yazeed Al-Rajhi and co-driver Timo Gottschalk overshadowed the five factory entries to make the Overdrive team a rare privateer victor. At his 11th attempt, Al-Rajhi – the first winner from Saudi Arabia – beat Toyota Gazoo driver Henk Lategan by just 3min 57sec. That's close in a Dakar context.

GETTY IMAGES

YOUR VIEWS

WRITE TO autocar@haymarket.com

Letter of the week

IT'S ALL I'VE EVER WANTED

I felt more than a touch of sadness when I read your BMW Alpina B3 GT Touring road test, entitled "last of the last", in which you urged readers to "buy one now" (15 January).

The Alpina company's demise at the end of 2025, when ownership of the brand will transfer to BMW, almost exactly matches my driving career. In 1964, while having my car serviced in Germany, I picked up a copy of ADAC magazine in which I read about an individual (the name of Herr Bovensiepen meant nothing to me then) whose privately entered BMW was beating the factory-prepared cars. I bought my first BMW, a 2002, direct from Munich in December 1969 and, apart from one break, stayed loyal to the marque until my sad experience with two electric cars (Your Views, 2 March 2022 and 21 July 2023), after which I returned to it.

From 1964 to date, I have wanted an Alpina D3 and read every Autocar road test of one, but I could never afford one, and the feeling of a missed opportunity and sadness remains.

Over the years, two of your correspondents, having tested a B3 or D3, have used this phrase at the end: "It is all the car you will ever need." What more appropriate epitaph can there be?

Tim Terry
Coneythorpe, North Yorkshire

I'M GLUTEN-FREE

What a refreshing change it was to read a review of the Mercedes-Benz E450d Estate (8 January) instead of the usual fare of faux SUVs that are little more than four-door bread vans with pumped-up suspension.

My car is a BMW 335d M Sport Touring, and in more than 50 years of motoring it's the best complete car I've ever owned. When cars like this are available, it beggars belief that people buy these bread vans.

Even Autocar described the 335d as of towering ability, which is an accolade not due to any bread van.

As your James Disdale said, we have all pondered our car wishlist with the lounge bar petrol/diesel heads, and for me it would be very simply putting BMW's 4.4-litre V8 into a 3 Series Touring.

James Collier
Crewe, Cheshire

TAKE MY WORD FOR IT

I've just taken delivery of a new Volvo XC40, which I'm finding to be an excellent, very well built and comfortable (if thirsty) car.

I was nervous about criticisms made by Autocar (and others) that even simple tasks, like adjusting the fan speed, involved multiple and distracting prods at a hard-to-use screen that incorporated several unfathomable menu layers, and that this deficiency was very much at the expense of driving safety.

My Volvo dealer explained that such criticisms were baseless, as all these actions could be achieved through simple speech commands. All that's required is a 'Hey Google, turn up the heating' etc, and I'm finding that it works brilliantly.

The cheerful Google lady has been well trained and one's instructions can be expressed clumsily, even in a hesitant Hugh Grant style, and she understands first time around. Indeed, the voice commands work so well and so naturally that I wouldn't now want to use a dedicated button, even if it were large, brightly lit and staring me in the face.

You continue to raise criticisms about Volvo's user interface, which leaves me wondering whether not all new Volvo cars feature speech recognition or whether you are unfamiliar with the system.

James Ross
Storrington, West Sussex

We do always test the voice control, but it takes longer than pressing a button, it interrupts the radio (or your passenger) and not everything can be controlled through it, so voice control is no excuse for an otherwise flawed user interface – IV

A DIRTY TRICK

Mark Tisshaw's amusing anecdote about making an already dirty Alpine A290 even filthier for the Car of the Year photoshoot (What we did this week, 8 January) brought back a memory from the 1960s.

When back in Bournemouth during breaks from college, I worked at George Hartwell's large Rootes Group dealership, cleaning and driving cars. In December 1968, we heard on the radio that Andrew Cowan had won the first London to Sydney Rally in a Hillman Hunter after powering through as others fell by the wayside. This unexpected win was great news for the Hartwell team, and they decided to replicate the rally car for their showroom.

The tuning experts very quickly modified a standard Hunter with Minilite wheels, big driving lamps and door decals. Then it was my job to get it 'rally dirty'. My first try was pretty wimpy, so out I went again with a bucket to scoop up muddy water and create speed streaks.

People were amazed to see the 'winning' rally car in their local showroom within hours of its victory in Australia!

Rodger Bending
Via email

A young Rodger seen heading towards Poole

Can we just stick to having circular wheels, please?

This is always a disappointing discovery

IT'S NOT IDEAL, MICHAEL

Given that new cars come with a range of mandatory safety systems, how on earth has it been allowed that steering wheels now come in a range of weird and wonderful shapes, many of which wouldn't serve terribly well as a wheel? I can't imagine some of these – especially the Knight Rider-style ones – would be as safe as the traditional circle in an emergency situation.

Mark Stewart
Via email

BUY YOUR OWN

Nigel Hammill's letter about spare wheels (22 January) resonated with me. I've had two cars in which a spare wasn't possible: a Toyota iQ and a Mazda MX-5. All the others had at least a spacesaver. Then I bought a 2021 Hyundai Tucson Hybrid, which came only with the emergency foam stuff – a waste of space, in my opinion, as it won't cope with all tyre deflations.

My dealer couldn't offer a spare but suggested I look online. I found thewheelshop.co.uk and bought a kit with an 18in spacesaver, a jack and a wheel brace. The only downside is the spacesaver is for the rear only, as the standard wheels are 19in.

I was able to remove my Tucson's boot-floor moulding to enable the spacesaver and jack to go in without a loss of boot space. Unfortunately, the Plug-in Hybrid version doesn't have the recess – a shortcoming shared with other PHEVs.

Malcolm Jennings
Via email

SKATING ON THIN ICE

I think Scotty and 'Ricequackers' are exactly right on the subject of the farcical zero-emission vehicle mandate and 2030 ICE car sales ban (8 January). It's just ludicrous. I don't think the government has any choice but to admit it was way off public opinion and quietly forget it.

What I don't understand is why the car makers didn't fight it more aggressively when it was passed. Then Stellantis boss Carlos Tavares was the only one who criticised it publicly, saying that he would shut UK factories if the UK government didn't revise its policy. Yet at the same time he had made sure that nearly all of the brands under his authority had stopped building their most popular ICE models.

Fiat and Abarth now have no ICE car range at all in the UK and there's no certainty that we will be offered the hybrid version of the new Fiat Grande Panda. Their EV sales are so bad, even in Italy, that 500e production has been halted.

Tavares has now gone, but the damage has been done. Stellantis seems in real trouble. Meanwhile, Volkswagen is closing factories and Ford is in disarray, all because of this notion to make people buy EVs.

Yes, it's the same in other European countries, but the UK is more aggressive in this matter.

I really think this is the year it will all hit the fan, and the collateral damage will be the loss of some big names. I really fear for Fiat, Abarth, DS, Maserati, Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin, Ford and Jaguar.

Kevin Brock
Via email

Weekly winner

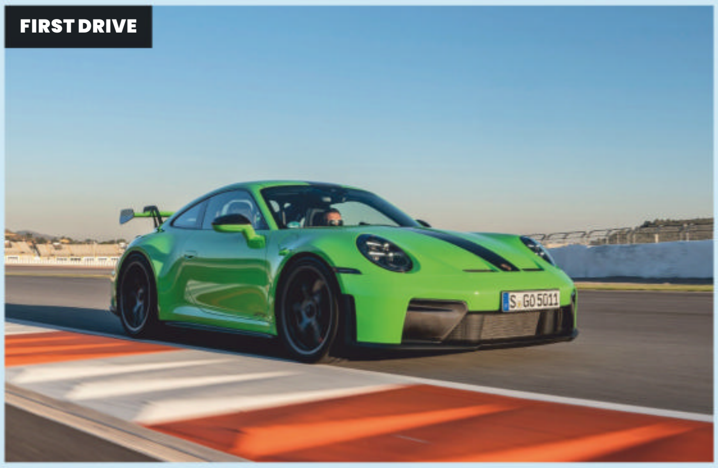
Letter of the week wins this ValetPro exterior protection and maintenance kit worth £48

GREAT REASONS TO BUY

Next week's issue

ON SALE 5 FEBRUARY

FIRST DRIVE



PORSCHE 911 GT3

Does the latest iteration of Stuttgart's hardcore flagship live up to expectations? Matt Prior finds out at Valencia's Circuit Ricardo Tormo

FEATURE

THE LEGACY OF THE LEGACY

A fond farewell to Subaru's all-paw estate after 35 years in production

INSIGHT

MERC'S REINVENTION

The firm's tech boss tells us about the biggest change in its long history

EVERY WEEK

LIVING WITH A...

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BMW M4

Why this fast coupé can be a great second-hand buy

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The original car magazine, published since 1895 'in the interests of the mechanically propelled road carriage'

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FIRST DRIVES

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

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HOW WE TEST CARS

Autocar delivers several kinds of reviews on new cars, with different levels of technical and functional scrutiny. As the name suggests, our First Drives section typically addresses cars that we're driving for the first time - either in final production form or as late prototypes. Time in the car can be limited here, technical and equipment specification might not be finalised and some systems software may not be to production specification. For those reasons, First Drive reports don't have star ratings.

Once we have driven a car for a second time in the UK, in right-hand-drive form and typically at greater length, we will rate it, either as part of a shorter UK test report or as the subject of a full, instrumented Road Test.

In the latter case, we take empirical performance and refinement benchmarks from it at Horiba MIRA proving ground, as well as subjective limit handling impressions, plus key measurements of practicality, efficiency and kerb weight.

All UK tests and Road Tests receive proper verdicts with star ratings informed by everything we have learned and the combined impressions and experience of several testers.

TESTED 9.12.24, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE **DELIVERIES** NOW

GBS ZERO

Midlands Caterham is now in its second generation

The GBS (that's Great British Sports Cars) Zero is among a number of Seven-alike models whose existence Caterham has learned to tolerate during the past few decades.

The first of those (the original unoriginal?) was a Westfield that looked so much like a Seven that Caterham litigated it into it having a slightly different appearance, and every Seven-but-not-a-Seven since has been a variation on the theme: familiar but somehow not at the same time, like seeing a mate who has been clean-shaven for 30 years suddenly appear with a beard.

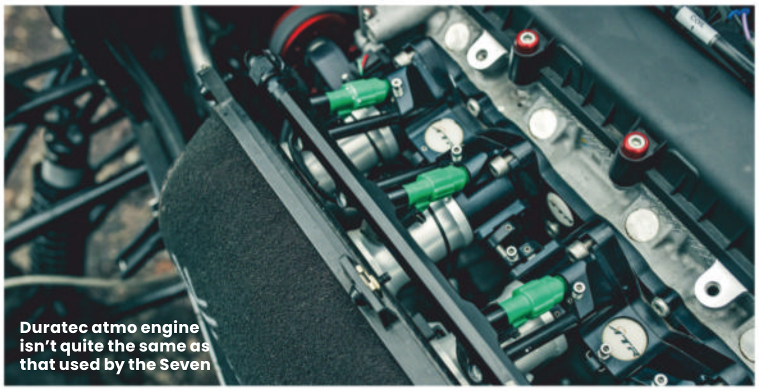
The Zero is GBS's take on the minimal, two-seat, front-engined, rear-driven roadster. We haven't driven one for more than a decade, and there will be a huge difference between that car and this 'second-generation' one. Indeed, GBS director Richard Hall says the firm aims for a "5% improvement every year, reducing cost or bringing weight down or something, so we're never standing still".

GBS is unusual among low-volume makers in that it likes to make things itself, rather than assemble outsourced components, and it estimates that 80% of the Zero is built at its site in Ollerton, Nottinghamshire, including fabricating the chassis.

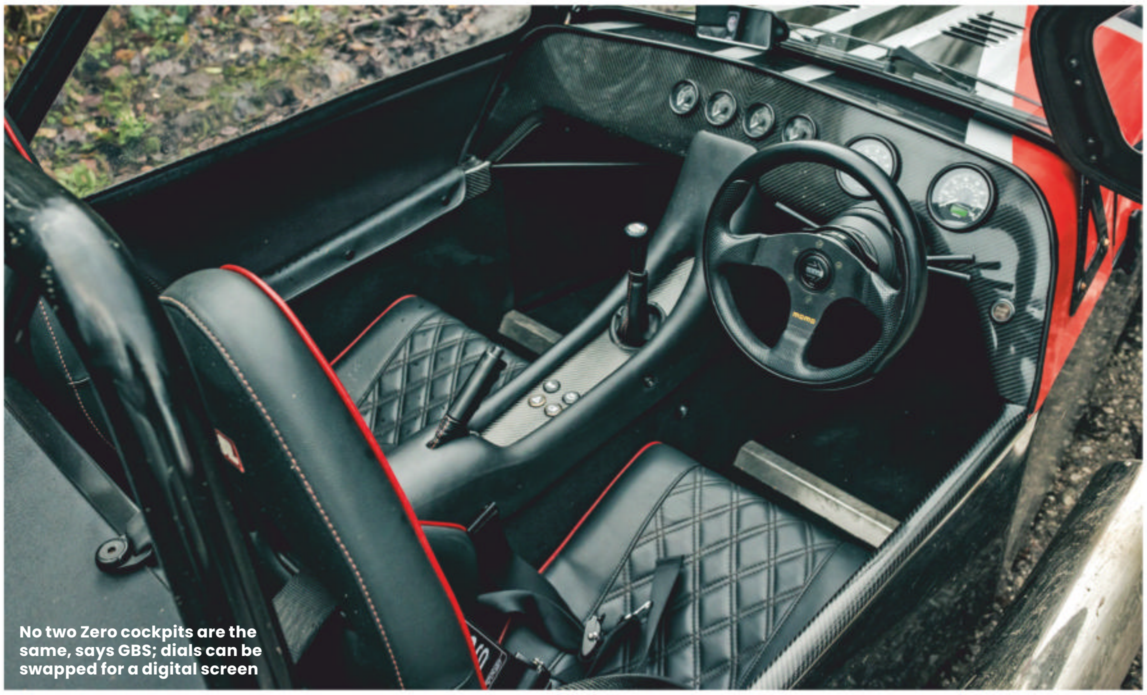
This is less surprising when you wander through the factory to find that GBS is an engineering company at heart, making throttle bodies, radiators, brake discs, brake calipers and dampers, which it sells under the ATR brand name.

Renowned Mazda MX-5 tuner BBR uses ATR throttle bodies and some high-end restomodders have used GBS's composite design skills. There's a classic Mercedes Unimog disassembled for restoration in one corner. They do factory tours and cars and coffee meets here.

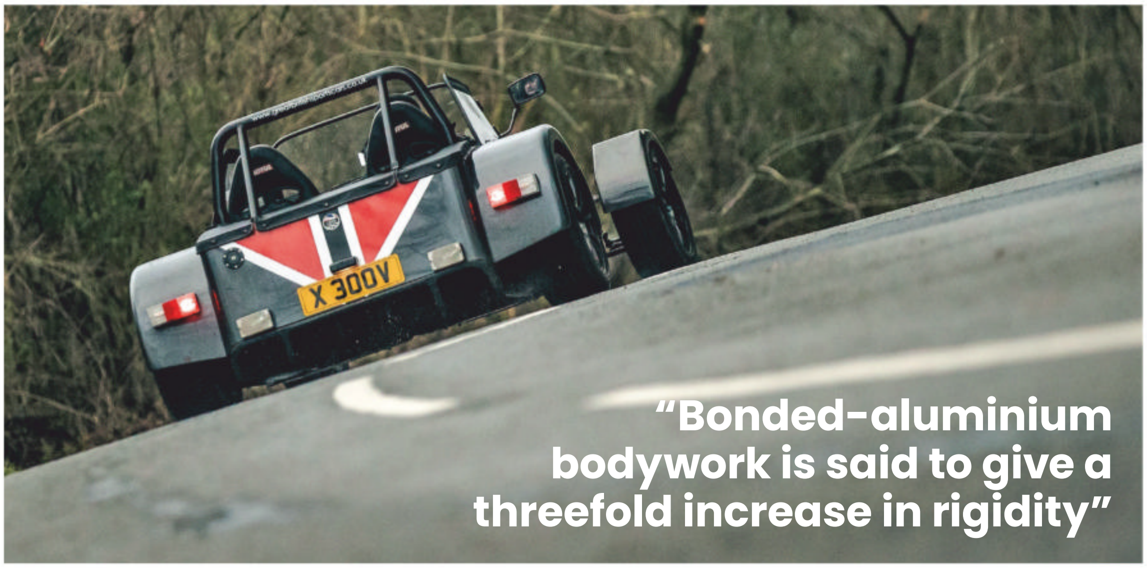
But the Zero basics are as per other Seven-esque sports cars, with a fabricated steel chassis, built relatively accommodatingly. GBS does a wider-chassis option, but



Duratec atmo engine isn't quite the same as that used by the Seven



No two Zero cockpits are the same, says GBS; dials can be swapped for a digital screen



“Bonded-aluminium bodywork is said to give a threefold increase in rigidity”

TESTER'S NOTE

There's no heater, which doesn't sound like fun when there's also no roof or proper windows, but you can have heated seats. I do like heated seats. **MP**

I doubt few will find it necessary: this is already broader of seat and footwell than a Caterham.

Aluminium bodywork is bonded to the panels, which gives a threefold increase in rigidity, says Hall: “We're confident we make the stiffest [Seven-like] chassis.”

All up weight is around 600kg, evenly distributed front to rear.

There are factory-build and kit options, with the latter making exports possible: GBS couldn't sell a fully built car in the US, for example, but it supplies kits there.

In the UK, factory-built Zeros start at £41,861 on the road, with a 2.5-litre Ford Duratec four making 210bhp and 196lb ft. GBS shortens the sump and fits throttle bodies, a stainless-steel exhaust, a lightened flywheel and billet engine pulleys.

This drives the back wheels through a Mazda five-speed manual gearbox (niche firms will be hoping that MX-5 production continues for some time). There's an option for an MX-5-based Zero, too.

There's a simple but comprehensive price list, with options including roll-cage upgrades, power hikes, limited-slip differential choices, colours, trims and more. Our test car has a few boxes ticked, including a smart carbonfibre dashboard, which is shorn of most buttons, with a few of them moving onto the transmission tunnel, and three column stalks for wipers and lighting, including self-cancelling indicators.

Overall perceived quality impressions are pretty good.

The cockpit is snug, with fiddly doors, as per on cars like this, and four-point harnesses are standard. There's generous room in the footwell – about as much as in Caterham's wide chassis. The steering wheel doesn't adjust and the gearlever sprouts a little longer from the tunnel than in a Seven.

Rolling comfort is pretty good but body control remains tight, as you would expect given it doesn't weigh a great deal. It does, though, always feel that bit bigger and less immediate than a standard Seven.

There are double wishbones front and rear and 15in Team Dynamics alloy wheels wearing 195/50-profile Yokohama AD08 tyres.

It's true that the chassis feels rigid, although, as with many cars like this, there are still things that make a noise – doors, harness buckles and the like – as you tackle pockmarked roads.

The steering is a bit nervy around the straight-ahead. I noticed when climbing in that there's a little flex allowed by the topmost column mount, elegantly designed though it is. You only notice it when hauling the wheel at parking speeds, but it may not help when rolling.

Otherwise, the control layout and ergonomics are good, and the pedal spacing is generous, and the feel and weighting of the controls and the pedal positions (micro makers don't always nail these things) are fine.

Performance is strong. There's ample response throughout the rev range and an accurate gearshift.

It was a pretty grim, greasy December day for my drive, so hot-asphalt, sticky-tyred, high-g-force cornering will have to wait (we will try a Zero on a circuit later this year), but the handling seems precise. It can be very docile too. Traction breaks easily but predictably in these conditions and is something that, again, we will hope to explore more when the year warms through.

On this first impression, I look forward to it.

MATT PRIOR

TECH SPEC

GBS ZERO

GBS's take on the minimalist two-seat roadster theme goes a little bigger and adds some compliance. Good even on a winter's day

Price £41,861
Engine 4 cyls in line, 2488cc, petrol
Power 210bhp at 7000rpm
Torque 196lb ft at 4000rpm
Gearbox 5-spd manual, RWD
Kerb weight 600kg
0-62mph 3.5sec
Top speed 136mph
Economy na
CO_2, tax band na
Rivals Caterham Seven, MK RX-5

TESTED 21.1.25, BARCELONA, SPAIN **DELIVERIES** NOW

CITROEN C4

Exterior redesign and interior updates for this placid family hatchback

TESTER'S NOTE
Based on trim level, two different coloured clips are offered for the nose and C-pillar. Our test car featured a gold set, which looked rather nice. **WR**

> "It's a car that can be summed up by one word: sensible"

The funky-looking third-generation C4 hatchback has been one of Citroën's best-sellers in the UK since its arrival in 2021. It was a big departure in terms of design and quality from the car it replaced, and now, four years later, the model has been updated to bring it up to date with a host of new rivals in the bulging C-segment.

Most of the work has been focused on giving the C4 a fresh look and updating its interior.

Drawing inspiration from 2022's Oli and 2024's C5 Aircross concepts, the new nose is centred on Citroën's updated logo (inspired by the original badge from 1919), which is flanked by new squared-off LEDs (replacing those distinctive Y-shaped headlights) and a widened profile. The Citroën name replaces the two chevrons at the rear, too.

What remains, then, are the C4's standout features, such as a raised ride height, high bonnet and elevated beltlines, which give it the presence of a compact SUV, sitting more than 150mm off the ground (a lot for a traditional hatchback).

Inside, little has changed visually, but Citroën has fitted new Advanced Comfort Seats, which offer 15% more padding than the slightly flat but broad seats they replace. On the move, they provide more lateral support and comfort than before, although the extra padding feels slightly hard in the upper back area and there's still a lack of under-thigh support. They are adjusted manually at all trim levels.

Space up front is about what you would expect from a family hatchback. Citroën said it was designed as a 'cocoon', and you can sense that. Space in the rear is a similar story, with average head and leg room.

Boot space below the parcel shelf remains at 380 litres: another quite average showing. This is unlikely to be a car one will be drawn to for its practicality.

The facelift also brings an updated 7in digital instrument screen, which provides a very simple speedometer but little else at much scale.

The 10in infotainment touchscreen has had a software update and now features bigger icons for easier on-the-move usage. The wireless smartphone mirroring, meanwhile, is rather sluggish and a bit of a faff to use.

In short, both screens still feel old and outdated compared with rivals'.

The head-up display fitted to our top-rung test car adds some useful extra information and its position can be adjusted via physical buttons.

Rear is notably tighter than the Kamiq's

The materials in the cabin are a bit of a mixed bag. There are harder, rougher mouldings in easy-to-reach places and the extensive use of gloss black plastic just promotes fingerprints and makes a clean cabin look dirty very quickly.

While offering a pleasant aesthetic on the surface, with plush-looking seats, in reality it's quite a dull affair, even in Max spec.

As part of the 2025 update, the entry-level 99bhp 1.2-litre petrol engine has been dropped from the line-up, meaning the C4 can no longer be had with a manual gearbox. As such, the only non-electrified option is the 128bhp 1.2-litre turbocharged petrol triple, with an eight-speed automatic gearbox. This is accompanied by a new 99bhp 1.2-litre mild-hybrid petrol, mated to a six-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox, and the same system with 134bhp.

Seats and screens are better than before but there is still room for improvement

Roly-poly handling signals that it's not one for hurrying

Its 0.43kWh battery can really offer just a mile or two of EV-only driving, but strong regenerative braking helps it recharge quickly.

When more power is called for, the transition from electric to combustion power is noticeable but not overly so.

The six-speed dual-clutcher is geared just a little on the long side, and this combines with fairly dull accelerator response to make the C4 feel slightly apathetic.

This is an inoffensive car to drive. Around town and at low speeds, the steering feels really light. However, above 30mph, a lot of the weight previously absent from the steering duly materialises, allowing it to be placed much more easily. It rolls a little when turning even at modest speeds; go faster and its gathering body movement becomes unsettling.

Much of the success of this car's positioning rests on its ride and refinement, and it does well in these regards when the surface is smooth.

So, the C4 continues to be a car that, funky exterior aside, can be summed up by one word: sensible. While not particularly practical, it's easy to get along with, well equipped and, starting at just £22,295, enticingly priced.

WILL RIMELL

TECH SPEC

CITROEN C4 HYBRID 136PS MAX

Doesn't offer anything that sets it apart, but its value and focus on comfort make it worth considering

Price £26,625
Engine 3 cyls in line, 1199cc, turbocharged, petrol, plus electric motor and ISG
Power 134bhp
Torque 170lb ft
Gearbox 6-spd dual-clutch automatic, FWD
Kerb weight 1335kg
0-62mph 8.0sec
Top speed 130mph
Economy 51.1mpg
CO_2, tax band 107g/km, 26%
Rivals Kia Stonic, Ford Focus, Skoda Kamiq

TESTED 21.1.25, BARCELONA, SPAIN **DELIVERIES** NOW

CITROEN E-C4 X

Similarly refreshed saloon sampled in electric form

ALONGSIDE THE C4, Citroën has updated the largely identical C4 X.

The saloon's extra 140mm of rear end compared with the hatchback increases boot space to 510 litres, which compares well with other cars in the segment, but its long, shallow shape makes that space hard to utilise. You won't have much joy moving large furniture.

While it is effectively the same car as the C4, C4 X sales aren't big in Western Europe, with the model instead positioned to push Citroën into more global markets. It has sold more than 30,000 examples in Turkey alone, for example.

It offers the same range of powertrains as the updated C4, excepting the 128bhp petrol.

The C4 X offers the same ICE powertrains as the C4, but here we're testing the electric variant, badged ë-C4 X (which continues alongside the ë-C4 hatchback).

Two versions are available, respectively using a 134bhp motor and a 50kWh battery and a 154bhp motor and a 54kWh battery.

Like other Stellantis EVs, the ë-C4 X offers a gradual increase in power, rather than instant response – something that adds to the relaxed nature of the family hauler.

Sport mode adds a touch more spice to proceedings, but you would never call it rapid.

Comfort takes priority over excitement

The regenerative braking is strong – most of your deceleration can be done without having to touch the brake pedal – but won't bring you to a complete stop.

Despite the extra 236kg inflicted by the EV's powertrain, the handling is nearly identical to the ICE C4's at town speeds and it's just as easy to manoeuvre in tight confines. Move up to motorway speeds, though, and you can feel that weight, especially through sweeping corners in the form of extra body roll.

The 54kWh ë-C4 X offers 262 miles of range, according to the WLTP test cycle, and the 4.1mpkWh efficiency our car achieved in temperate Barcelona would equate to about 210 miles in the real world.

The ë-C4 X costs from £26,295 to £30,150, which makes it a bit of a bargain compared with electric hatchbacks such as the Volkswagen ID 3 (£30,850) and Renault Megane (£33,995) – if not the MG 4 EV (£26,995), which will appeal much more to keen drivers.

WILL RIMELL

TECH SPEC

CITROEN E-C4 X MAX

Saloon doesn't hit the heights of the hatch but is still a good proposition. Electric powertrain makes either C4 variant an appealing EV

Price £30,095
Engine Permanent magnet synchronous motor
Power 154bhp
Torque 192lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, FWD
Kerb weight 1571kg
0-62mph 9.2sec
Top speed 93mph
Battery 54.0kWh (total)
Range, economy 262 miles, 4.2mpkWh
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 2%
Rivals MG 4 EV, Renault Megane, VW ID 3

TESTED 21.1.25, GLOUCESTERSHIRE **DELIVERIES** NOW

KGM ACTYON

Korean brand turns up the style and refines the recipe for Torres spin-off

Sleeker rear and lack of fake spare-wheel holder mark it out from the Torres

Flat-bottomed wheel and red trim elements aim to give a sporting feel

At first glance, it's easy to dismiss the new KGM Actyon as a sleeker version of the Torres SUV that arrived in the UK last year. There is some truth in that: the two are close in size and style and share a platform and a powertrain. But KGM bosses insist there has been plenty of work to differentiate the two and make the Actyon worthy of its own name – and of being the first model developed in Pyeongtaek since Ssangyong was bought by the KG conglomerate.

The Actyon is a scant 35mm longer (at 4740mm), 20mm wider and 40mm taller than the Torres. Owing to that sloping roofline, it has a slightly smaller boot, although at 668 litres it's still substantially bigger than that offered by the Kia Sportage, the current leader of the family SUV pack.

The exterior design blends elements from the petrol and electric versions of the Torres, with some extra flashes of distinct style and a roofline that clearly nods to the Range Rover Evoque.

The interior also has a Torres flavour, with a clean dashboard design built around two 12.3in digital screens.

In the UK, the Actyon will be offered in a single trim level, with basically every option box already ticked for you. So there's plenty of kit, nappa leather seats and sporty red trim elements.

KGM has made a bit of an effort to put some upmarket feel into the cabin, with the likes of a crystal-style gear selector in the 'floating' centre console and plenty of carbonfibre-effect trim, but you're not going to mistake it for a premium model.

Still, it's certainly spacious in both the front and the back row and visibility is really good.

Unlike the Torres, the Actyon is being launched with only one powertrain option: the familiar 1.5-litre four-cylinder turbo petrol engine, offering the same 161bhp and 207lb ft of torque. However, KGM insists a lot of work has been done on the engine response to boost real-world performance.

Similarly, the suspension – a big disappointment on the Torres – has been reworked, and much effort has been expended to reduce cabin noise.

The engine isn't exactly the last word in performance, but there's a reasonable whack of low-down torque when you need it and it will coast along quite happily at speed.

However, the Aisin-produced six-speed automatic gearbox doesn't seem brilliantly aligned with the engine, frequently refusing to shift up and generally frustrating.

The fuel economy is also underwhelming: the official figure is a mere 33mpg, compared with 44mpg for the equivalent Sportage or Ford Kuga, and it averaged just over 28mpg on our test run.

The ride definitely felt better than in the Torres, although that's relative. The Actyon feels better able to cope with bumpy British roads, but there's still quite a bit of jitter to the somewhat firm ride.

It's not an especially sporty SUV to drive, either: the steering is lacking in feel and there's a slight wobble in corners that leaves you disconnected from the road. Still, in everyday driving you probably wouldn't find much to complain about.

One definite area of improvement over the Torres is refinement: the effects of the new sound-absorbing materials and noise-cancelling 20in tyres can clearly be detected.

The Actyon undoubtedly has a strong connection to the Torres, but you can sense some well-targeted (if subtle) work to improve that car's rough edges. It feels like a step in the right direction for KGM, and there is a touch of imperfect charm about it.

It won't be to everyone's tastes, of course, but we can see it appealing as a left-field alternative.

The big challenge for KGM will be that it's substantially undercut by rivals, especially the MG HS, despite not being able to match them in objective terms.

JAMES ATTWOOD

TECH SPEC

KGM ACTYON 1.5 GDI K50

Has a disappointing fuel economy, a slightly jittery ride and uninspiring handling but will offer a certain alternative charm to some

Price £36,995
Engine 4 cyls in line, 1497cc, turbo, petrol
Power 161bhp at 5000rpm
Torque 207lb ft at 1500rpm
Gearbox 6-spd automatic, FWD
Kerb weight 1580kg
0-62mph 10.8sec
Top speed 119mph
Economy 33.1mpg
CO_2, tax band 194g/km, 37%
Rivals Ford Kuga, Kia Sportage, MG HS

TESTER'S NOTE

Apparently the horizontal light strip above the grille is inspired by elements of the South Korean flag – a nice touch. **JA**

UK VERDICTS

TESTED 22.1.25, LEICESTERSHIRE **DELIVERIES** NOW

ISUZU D-MAX

TESTER'S NOTE
No version of the D-Max is heavy enough to be subject to the reduced speed limits (50mph on single carriageways and 60mph on dual carriageways) that can apply to pick-ups in the UK. **MS**

Japanese specialist refines no-nonsense, working man's pick-up truck

You will have read about the decline of the UK pick-up truck market, and lately about new BIK tax rules set to hasten its demise. Well, it isn't declining in all quarters. The self-proclaimed 'pick-up professionals' at Isuzu had their most successful year in 2024, selling more than 6600 D-Maxes – more, even, than they managed amid the 'lifestyle' pick-up boom of 2015.

The Japanese company expects to be less exposed to the April exit of those who have been running a pick-up in order to pay less tax. Most people who run a D-Max, it claims, do so because they genuinely need its capabilities: to carry 1200kg of bulky stuff, tow big trailers, access places far from the road network.

The D-Max also sells on its well-established reliability, we're told, and is backed up by a five-year/125,000-mile warranty.

The third-generation D-Max arrived here in 2021 with, among other developments, a lighter yet stiffer ladder frame, an improved front-axle design and a longer wheelbase, and now it has received a second dose of cosmetic, electronic and equipment tweaks.

Externally, the bonnet, radiator grille, front bumper and tail-lights have been redesigned. Inside, the multimedia technology has been upgraded across the D-Max line-up, with the addition of wireless smartphone mirroring on every model and part-digital instruments on the range-topper.

Isuzu offers a full range of single-, extended- and double-cab models, and only the cheapest single-cabbers come without a switchable, mechanical four-wheel drive system with transfer gearing and a locking rear differential. All are still powered by Isuzu's own 162bhp 1.9-litre four-cylinder turbo diesel engine.

The double-cabber is about as roomy for passengers in both the front and rear as any 'one-tonne' pick-up. The front seats a little hard and lacking in some adjustment ranges but comfortable enough.

The top-tier V-Cross version's part-leather seats and wider mix of materials are shinier and cheaper-looking than some in the class, but they needn't offend anyone.

The automatic transmission version, meanwhile, swaps the chunkier, simpler heater control knobs of the manual for a console of smaller, neater-looking climate control buttons that are, no doubt, supposed to look more sophisticated but don't really suit the car, and are fiddlier to use.

Isuzu's engine makes the D-Max slightly noisier than the equivalent Ford Ranger or Volkswagen Amarok, and it still feels that bit slower and less willing on the road than rivals. The relatively modest torque just doesn't move the truck's bulk along that willingly, which obliges you to work the engine harder than you might, say, a Toyota Hilux's 2.8-litre unit and leaves you more exposed to its coarseness.

There is likewise at least a little more fiddling, stiff-legged crudeness to the D-Max's on-road ride – more than the best-mannered pick-ups now suffer from. It handles precisely enough, though, and is by no means wayward or unpleasant to drive.

In off-road driving, the D-Max's standard-fit mud and snow tyres give it plenty of grip and capability and a new Rough Terrain mode for its electronic traction control helps it through really slippery and steep sections. At times, just as on the road, the engine feels a bit short on grunt, but not often.

So, while the packaging and peripheral stuff has changed a little here, the slightly rough, tough and rudimentary pick-up underneath hasn't. Which, for those who rate it – and given the reasons why they do – probably isn't such bad news after all.

MATT SAUNDERS

TECH SPEC

ISUZU D-MAX V-CROSS DOUBLE CAB AUTO

New styling and equipment features are fripperies, really, on this slightly crude but tough and dependable workhorse

★★★☆☆

Price £47,916
Engine 4 cyls in line, 1898cc, turbo, diesel
Power 162bhp at 3600rpm
Torque 266lb ft at 2000-2500rpm
Gearbox 6-spd automatic, 4WD
Kerb weight 2015kg
0-62mph 13.0sec
Top speed 112mph
Economy 31.4mpg
CO_2, tax band 235g/km, flat rate
Rivals Ford Ranger, Toyota Hilux, VW Amarok

Top-spec 9.0in touchscreen offers wireless phone mirroring

V-Cross's tailgate features a damper for gentler opening

ROAD TESTS

AUTOCAR ROAD TEST 5721

BMW M5

BMW embraces hybrid tech, but keeps the V8, for its super-saloon icon

MODEL TESTED
BMW M5 SALOON
Price £111,350
Power 718bhp
Torque 738lb ft
0-60mph 3.5sec
30-70mph 2.8sec
Top speed 190mph (claimed, with M Driver's Pack)
Average economy 26.9mpg
Electric range 35 miles
CO_2 emissions 34g/km
70-0mph 52.1m (4deg C, drying)

Supercars and hypercars excepted, few breeds of performance car have undergone more technical change over the past 10 years than the super-saloon. There is clearly something about precisely what these cars represent, the role they play, the prices they command and the importance they assume for their manufacturers that has ushered them down the express lane towards technical progression more quickly than, say, hot hatchbacks, sports cars or fast grand tourers.

And it's to the seventh-generation version of one of the founding super-saloons – the BMW M5 – that we now turn. Technical change already characterises this car's journey through the decades. From the third-generation E39 version, you can count off the various manifestations as 'the V8 one', 'the V10 one', 'the turbo one', 'the four-wheel-drive one' – and now the G90 will come to be thought of as 'the hybrid one'.

Then again, we already have plug-in hybrid and electric versions of the G60 5 Series on which this car is based. So it's time to find out exactly what the adoption of a PHEV powertrain means for the M5 – on weighbridge, proving ground and highway, and for the legacy of one of the most revered fast BMWs there has ever been.

DESIGN & ENGINEERING

★★★½☆

PROS Return of Touring bodystyle; doesn't force a downsized engine on anyone who wouldn't choose one
CONS Heavy, though not drastically or disproportionately so; lacks some active chassis tech of rivals

It's an indicator of the importance of this car to the profitability of the 5 Series model family that BMW has wasted so little time in launching it. The G60 5 Series had been in production at BMW's Dingolfing factory for barely a year when the G90 M5 joined it on the line midway through 2024, the G99 Touring being added just a few months later.

It's true, broadly speaking, that this car takes the 195bhp electric motor and 22.1kWh underfloor battery from a 550e xDrive and attaches them in train with what is largely the same 4.4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine as the last M5 used, and then – poof – is born as a 700-horsepower electrified super-saloon. But that's to say nothing of what's been done to make the resulting vehicle actually come together as the top-rung modern M car that BMW intended.

Mk2 5 Series spawned original M5 in 1985

To begin with, even more mass had to be grafted onto the G60 by way of chassis and axle bracing than was added by the car's hybrid system. That may be hard to credit at first, but consider that this has become a saloon weighing 2435kg without its driver and developing 718bhp of total power – and now imagine the sort of lateral loads both figures can combine to generate. The G90 uses transverse and longitudinal braces under the bonnet, around the front axle, and around and about the rear suspension subframe as part of a stiffening regime that even BMW itself describes as "extensive".

The car's S68 4.4-litre V8 engine is ostensibly an overhauled take on the old S63 with new twin-scroll turbochargers, and new induction, lubrication and exhaust systems – and, before we get too excited about electric torque fill, we should note that it can hit its 553lb ft torque peak at less than 2000rpm, yet keep spinning all the way to 7200rpm.

Among additional points to note: like other M cars, this one continues to represent the performance car division's preference for steel coil suspension over more adaptable air suspension – although, in this case, those coils are progressively, not consistently, rated.

The G90 is also the first M5 to use Integral Active four-wheel steering; it retains fully switchable M xDrive four-wheel drive; and it adopts a dedicated two-speed 'pre-gearing' stage for its electric motor, boosting the 207lb ft that the unit can make on its own to an effective 332lb ft.

It weighed 2373kg on Horiba MIRA's scales, with a third of a tank of fuel on board and BMW's carbon-ceramic brakes fitted: an awful lot, clearly, though only 34kg more than the hybridised Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S E Performance four-door that we tested in 2023.

INTERIOR

★★★★☆

PROS Superb seats; at least some tangible luxury appeal; plenty of four-seat adult occupant space
CONS Digital glare can be a bit much; saloon boot is only averagely large and accessible

With the interior of this unmistakably full-size, six-figure car, M division's job was necessarily different from its approach with the likes of the M2, M3 and M4. Indeed, when taking in cars like the M8 in recent years, the road test has observed that M division has floundered a little in achieving the particular blend of tactile quality, material richness and performance flourish that rivals at this rarefied level of the market can conjure.

The M5's cabin certainly seems like a more committed swing at such a compromise, though. Our test car made appealing use of two-tone merino leather (on its widely adjustable, supportive and very comfortable sports front seats especially), and did more than gesture at the kind of ambience some will expect for the price tag, with its cut-glass iDrive infotainment controller, decorative metallic speaker grilles and glossy silver-thread carbonfibre trim. Not every switch and toggle feels expensive, and plenty come straight out of the regular G60 5 Series parts bin, but it's nonetheless a pretty successful execution for a big, upscale modern M car.

■ The M5 gets completely redeveloped axles relative to the G60 base car, with more castor and kingpin angle up front, lower roll centres and widened tracks both front and rear (as you can see here), all covered with bespoke widened bodywork rather than wheel-arch spats.

■ Carbonfibre roof panel helps to lower the car's centre of gravity - but not as effectively as the 22.1kWh drive battery, which sits under the cabin floor sharing space with the 60-litre fuel tank.

As German executive saloons traditionally have done, it majors on interesting cabin technology. Like other 5 Series, the M5 presents a united pair of slightly curved digital displays in front of the driver (the central one 14.9in in diameter), packed with functions and information. That physical rotary controller plus useful top-layer and shortcut-bar touchscreen navigations make it a console you can get to grips with once you're used to everything it offers. But doing so is a little daunting at first.

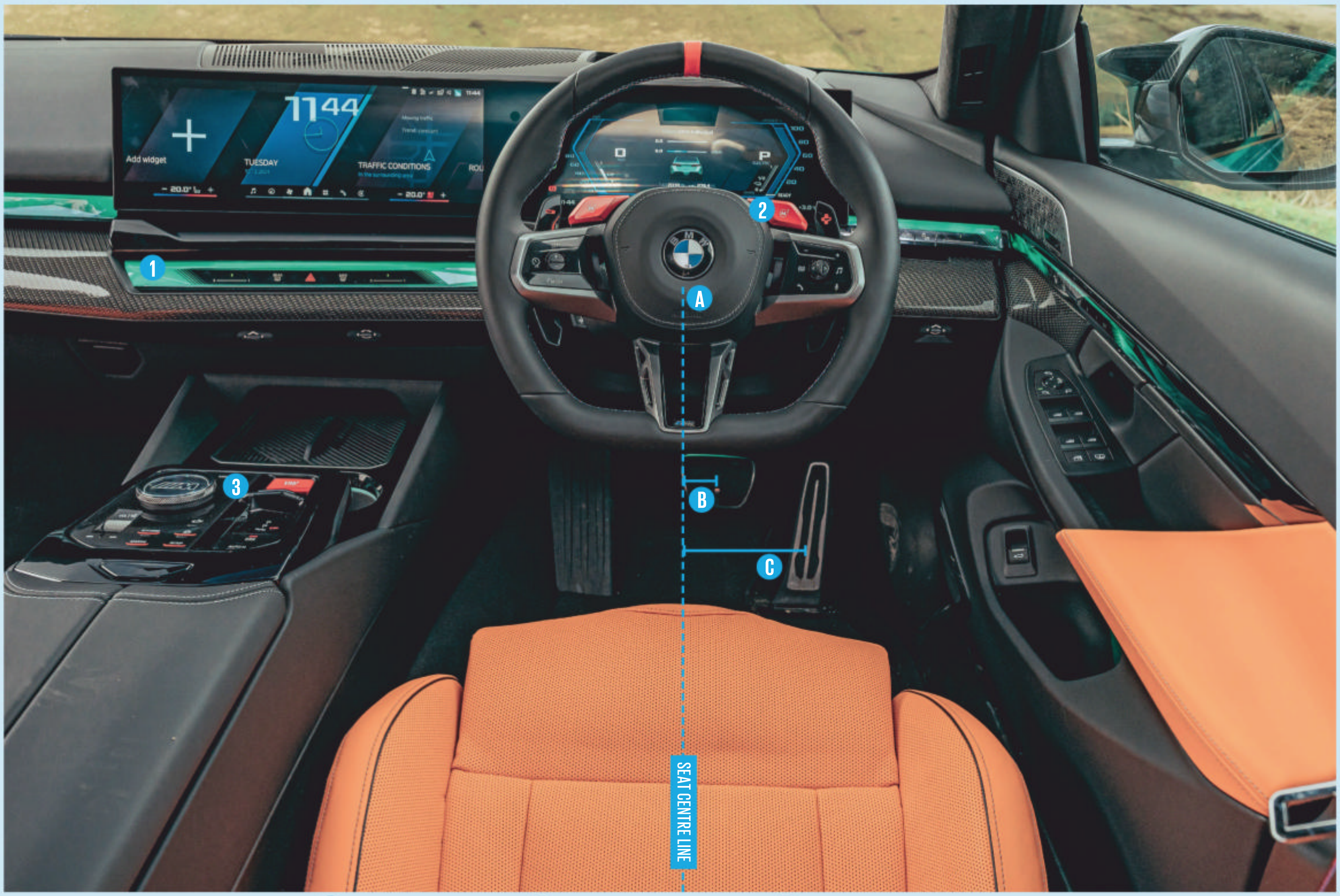
And yet only by entering the last of the car's three M modes of overarching operation (Road, Sport, Track) can you reduce the glare ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY MAX EDLESTON

① Interaction Bar's LED lighting element, now used widely in larger BMWs, can illuminate the M division's tricolour on the central dash. It's too bright and plasticky-looking for our tastes.

② You can save combinations of system settings and access them quickly via two orange buttons. They work brilliantly, allowing you to dial up rear-drive mode for a favourite corner, for example.

③ File gear-selection lever under 'small and fiddly'. We were very glad of the physical iDrive controller next to it, though, for scrolling around the infotainment system with less distraction.



WHEEL AND PEDAL ALIGNMENT Ⓐ Steering offset 0mm Ⓑ Brake offset 55mm right Ⓒ Accelerator offset 190mm right. Driving position is adjustable and well supported, with great pedal and wheel placement.

◂ of these screens to a minimum. Moreover, the Interaction Bar – a near-dashboard-wide multi-coloured strip of LED lighting for which myriad useful functions are claimed – sits beneath those screens, so often beaming even more brightness into your eyeballs.

As regards usability, the M5 saloon offers broadly what you expect: plenty of space for two bigger adults in the back row or three smaller occupants across a standard bench seat and a boot that's a competitive 466 litres, if a little restricted on outright width by wheel-arch intrusion (if you need more, the Touring model awaits).

PERFORMANCE

★★★★☆

PROS Knows many ways to feel fast; sounds better than its forebear
CONS Weight blunts outright performance

Chilly, damp test conditions dealt the new M5 a slightly weak hand on the numbers it could record. Those conditions varied from consistent rain to dry, and so our acceleration and braking benchmarks had to be recorded on slightly damp asphalt.

Had it been bone dry and warm, might we have witnessed something landmark? It's unlikely, and you need only look back to road test number 5532 and the last M5 we tested – the incredible F90 CS, in 2021 – to see why. Sure, the new car has almost 100 extra horsepower, but it nonetheless has a power-to-weight ratio that's 14% poorer.

So of course the new car is slower – to 60mph, 100mph and over a standing quarter – than the CS was (it was also slower to 60mph than the standard, 591bhp F90 M5 we tested in 2018). But is it disappointing? Not a bit, but rather incredibly responsive and hugely muscular and enticing in its way. The two-speed electric motor, for example, allows the car to put on speed in high gears more rapidly than even the CS could (40-60mph in sixth gear: 2.9sec versus 3.6sec; 50-70mph in eighth gear: 5.1sec versus 7.9sec – all through almost identical gearing).

Since the V8 revs with plenty of dramatic ferocity above 5000rpm, the new M5 is endowed with the sort of performance that can be poured on almost any which way that suits both you and the road ahead – and which never disappoints. That engine certainly sounds better than early F90-generation cars did, while the car's gearbox remains quick with paddle-shift changes, smooth and intuitive in D, and as adjustable in its shift timing and ferocity as ever.

If you want to enjoy the V8's new-found woofle, you will need the car's powertrain set to Sport or Sport Plus. There are Electric, Hybrid and e-Control modes too, though it's interesting that the M5's Iconic Sounds combustion noise synthesis system creates a discreet but perceptible background combustion rumble for the powertrain even in Electric.

Our test car also had BMW's M Drive Professional option, giving it Dynamic and Dynamic Plus hybrid modes on top. Only in the latter will the car wilfully run down its drive battery in pursuit of ultimate performance (and even when doing so, insist M division's engineers, it won't go flat before completing a flying lap of the Nürburgring Nordschleife).

HANDLING & STABILITY

★★★⯪☆

PROS Abundant grip and balance on smoother roads to which it's suited
CONS Seldom totally escapes its size and weight; excitable on complex surfaces

As with the M5's powertrain mode, you must choose the sort of handling you want from this car before drinking it in. The drivetrain offers 4WD, 4WD Sport and 2WD modes, each twinned with different traction and stability control regimes. If you want a rear-driven, 718bhp M5, for instance, you can only have it without any stability control at all – the notion of which may give you pause for thought.

Endless driver configurability remains something M division is convinced its customers want, evidently. It is some irony, therefore, that breadth of effective dynamic character is still what the M5 lacks on the road, as it struggles to transform itself convincingly from long-striding fast GT car to swivel-hipped sports saloon.

It does better on wider, smoother,

quicker roads, without question. The car has plenty of outright width, which makes you a little wary of its extremities on narrower lanes. But where it has room to flow and settle on its springs, the M5 has all the lateral grip it needs, as well as an unwavering levelness in its body control, and that willingness to rotate underneath you that marks out all modern M saloons. The car's steering is fairly direct, though not problematically so, but it's only fleetingly communicative in a tactile sense, and can suddenly weight up under load.

Seek out a bumpier A-road, and the car's completely redeveloped, widened axles do a little less well. Here, that 2.4 tonnes of kerb weight begin to tell when it's excited and disturbed, but mostly because BMW's passive anti-roll bars and coil springs make for fewer ways to actively manipulate and control it than are open to key rivals.

And so the M5 becomes a little fidgety, niggly and recalcitrant over complex surfaces, animated over asymmetrical inputs and unable to maintain the uncanny, awe-inspiring dynamic composure that its most revered predecessors could.

COMFORT & ISOLATION

★★★★☆

PROS Surprisingly quiet cruising ride; superb front seats; electric running bolsters low-speed refinement

CONS Not as supple as more dynamically versatile rivals

The M5's 21in rear wheels, and what must necessarily be the firm sidewalls of its Hankook tyres, sound like they should make for a noisy cruising ride – but they don't. Everyday touring comfort was clearly an objective during the development of this car, and the 68dBA that it recorded on our decibel meter at a 70mph cruise certainly tells that story (F90 M5 CS: 73dBA; Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S E Performance: 70dBA).

The Comfort mode of the car's adaptive dampers allows a fairly gentle, settled ride on most UK dual carriageways; it stops short of feeling supple and yet doesn't fuss or jiggle. The car's front seats offer excellent long-distance comfort and every kind of adjustment range you are likely to want, and while they are not mounted as low at the wheel as sports car regulars will be used to, they are certainly easy to berth and contribute to good visibility.

It's the M5's failure to find that supple, controlled, fast country road composure that lets it down a little, and why it sometimes fails to inspire you to really enjoy driving it in the places where smaller, lighter sports saloons can.

TRACK NOTES

★★★½☆

PROS Weight doesn't prevent it from entertaining or kill its circuit stamina

CONS Nowhere near as precise, controllable or pin-sharp as an M3

Horiba MIRA's wet and dry handling circuits suited the M5 well enough. Both are fairly smooth, wide in places and allow the car to demonstrate its competence, stamina and drivability when simply lapping fast – as well as some handling flair when its outer limits are explored.

Where an M5 of old might have quickly overworked its brakes – especially one weighing this much – the G90 didn't, its optional carbon-ceramic discs coping well in our fade testing. After more than five fast laps, it did start to overheat its tyres, but no worse than most cars of its size and type probably would have.

The M5's track handling impressed for its poise and throttle-on balance in the dry, and it didn't need to be switched to 2WD mode to feel that way. In the wet, all that weight made it a bit prone to rolling into trailing-throttle oversteer, but only when deactivated electronic aids would allow.

The car's handling is obliging and entertaining when it slides, though not as spookily controllable or predictable as little sibling M3.

BUYING & OWNING

★★★½☆

PROS Good usable electric range; not as expensive as some opponents

CONS Predicted residual values make concerning reading

The M5's pricing gives it a little clear air to exist within underneath an equivalent Porsche Panamera Turbo E-Hybrid, and far below Mercedes-AMG's GT 63 S four-door plug-in hybrid, but it will need every gulp of it.

A £111k departure point is probably about what M car regulars will expect to pay in 2025. But our sources suggest that the M5's residual values won't come close to matching the strength of the Porsche and will make personal finance particularly expensive if they are believed.

Would the market be less sceptical if not for the hybrid factor? Perhaps a little, though savage depreciation is a phenomenon well known to M5 owners. The fact is that it's this car's PHEV powertrain that will prevent it from being taxed into oblivion in some key markets. The rest of us must simply like it or lump it.

Owners are unlikely to be hugely interested in how much the car's electric running will boost their day-to-day average fuel economy. They might care more that, while some of this car's competitors struggle to return more than 10 miles of EV running, we averaged 35 miles in the M5: distance enough to actually entice you to charge it in the first place. ▸

FRONT Leg room 1140mm, head room 1000mm. Driving position is relatively high but still offers abundant leg and head room. Front seats are excellent.

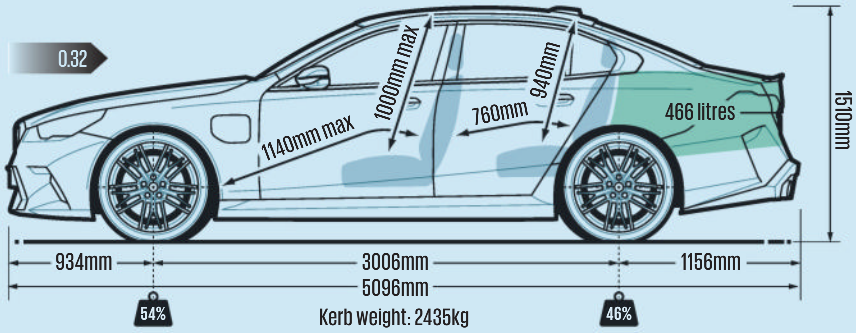
REAR Leg room 760mm, head room 940mm. Even taller adults can travel in decent comfort here. Or there's room for three kids, but it's a slight squeeze.

BOOT Length 1130-1970mm, width 800-1350mm, height 440-500mm. Boot is usefully long even with seatbacks up. Wheel arches limit loading width.

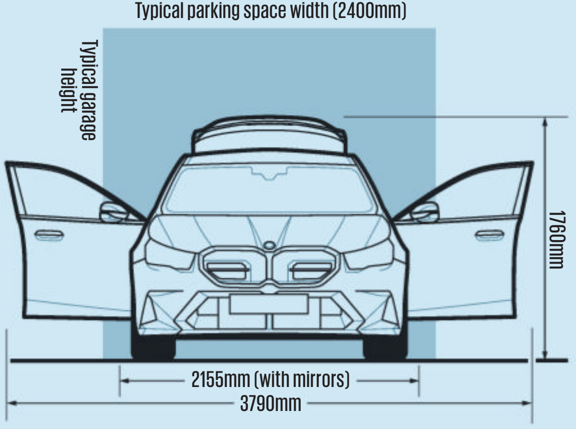
"It's still lacking that breadth of effective dynamic character"

TEST RESULTS

DIMENSIONS


0.32
1140mm max
1000mm max
760mm
940mm
466 litres
1510mm
934mm
3006mm
1156mm
5096mm
Kerb weight: 2435kg
54%
46%

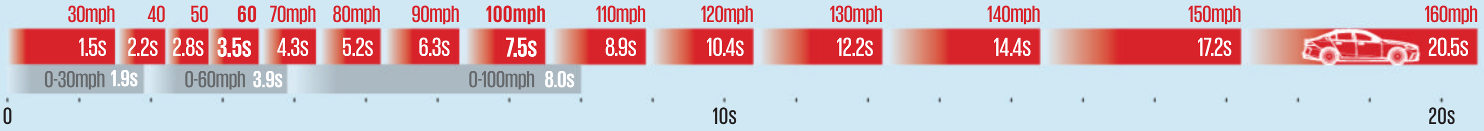
PARKING


Typical parking space width (2400mm)
Typical garage height
1760mm
2155mm (with mirrors)
3790mm

ACCELERATION

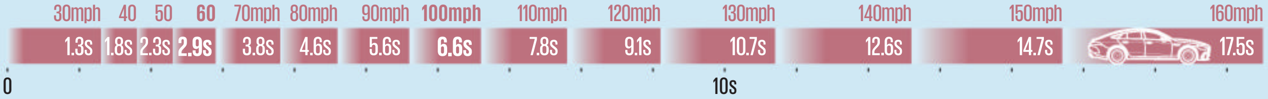
Test conditions 4deg C, drying

Standing quarter mile 11.5sec at 128.0mph **Standing km** 20.7sec at 160.8mph **30-70mph** 2.8sec **30-70mph in fourth** 3.5sec **0-62mph** 3.7sec



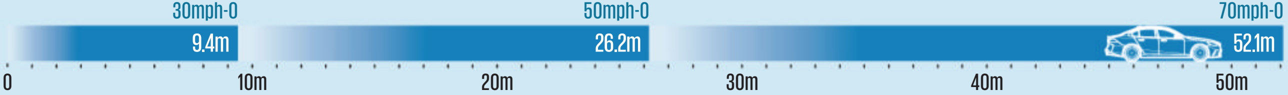
Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S E Performance 4 Door Coupé (2023, 19deg C, dry)

Standing quarter mile 10.9sec at 131.6mph **Standing km** 19.9sec at 166.8mph **30-70mph** 2.5sec **30-70mph in fourth** 3.6sec **0-62mph** na

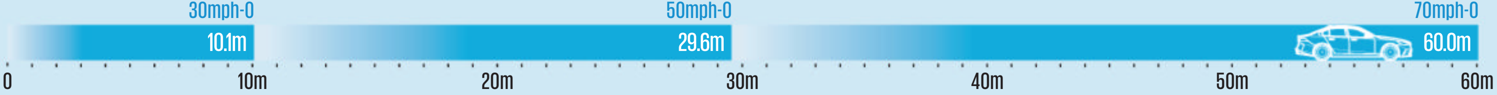


BRAKING

Dry 60-0mph 2.79sec



Wet 60-0mph 3.12sec

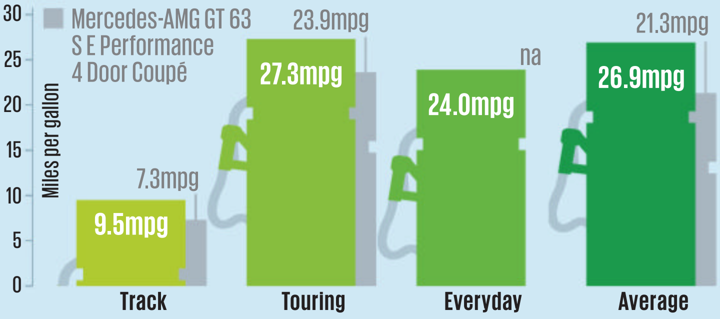


ACCELERATION IN GEAR

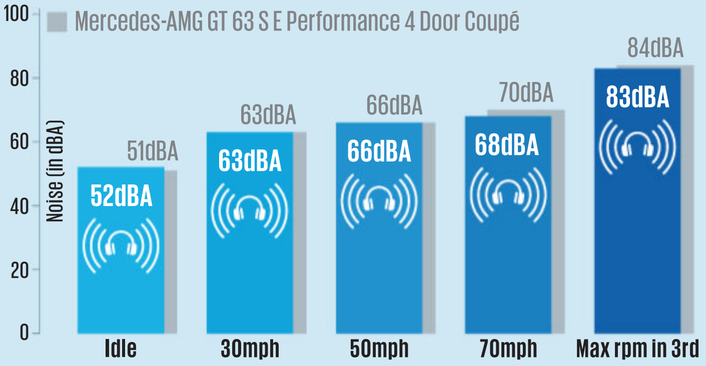
mph	Time (sec) 2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
20-40	1.2	1.5					
30-50	1.3	1.4	1.7	2.3			
40-60		1.4	1.7	2.3	2.9	3.6	
50-70		1.5	1.8	2.4	3.0	3.7	5.1
60-80		1.7	1.8	2.4	3.1	3.9	5.3
70-90			2.0	2.5	3.2	4.0	5.7
80-100			2.3	2.5	3.4	4.2	6.1
90-110				2.7	3.5	4.5	6.6
100-120				3.0	3.6	4.7	7.6
110-130				3.5	3.8	5.1	9.3

RUNNING EFFICIENCY

WLTP 176.6mpg (combined) **Test range** 390/395/352 miles (average/touring/everyday) **Electric test range** 35 miles

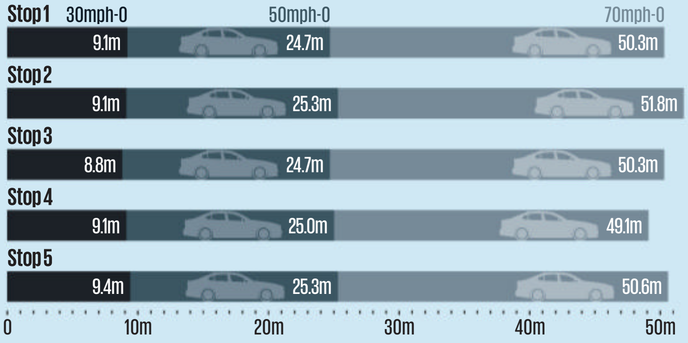


CABIN NOISE



BRAKING ENDURANCE

Fade variance 70-0m – stop 1 vs stop 5: 0.3m



PETER LIDDIARD

THE SMALL PRINT Power-to-weight and torque-to-weight figures are calculated using manufacturer's claimed kerb weight. © 2025, Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Test results may not be reproduced without editor's written permission. For information on the M5, contact BMW Customer Services, BMW UK, Summit One, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0FB (0370 5050 160, bmw.co.uk).

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATION

BMW M5 SALOON

On-the-road price £111,350
Price as tested £133,275
Value after 3yrs/36k miles £51,475
Typical PCP £1483 pcm (£33,000 deposit + 36 months/30,000 miles – includes Ultimate Pack)
Insurance group 49

FITTED EQUIPMENT

Standard 20/21in alloy wheels, Live Cockpit Pro with head-up display, Bowers & Wilkins surround audio **Optional** Ultimate Pack (including M Carbon Ceramic brakes, M Carbon Exterior Styling, M Driver's Pack) £19,500, Mode 2 charging cable £350, Isle of Man Green paint £0, towbar £1200, Kyalami Orange merino leather £500

HYBRID POWERTRAIN

Engine Front, longitudinal, 4WD
Type V8, 4395cc, twin-turbo, petrol; 577bhp at 5600-6500rpm, 553lb ft at 1800-5400rpm
Motor Permanent magnet synchronous motor, gearbox-mounted; 195bhp, 207lb ft
Battery type NMC
Capacity 22.1/18.6kWh (total/usable)
Voltage 348V
Total system power 718bhp
Total system torque 738lb ft
Power to weight 295bhp per tonne
Torque to weight 303lb ft per tonne

GEARBOX

Type 8-spd automatic
Ratio spread 5.00:1-0.64:1
rpm in top at 70/80mph 1712/1956

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction Aluminium and steel monocoque
Weight/as tested 2435kg/2373kg
Weight distribution (f/r) 54%/46%
Drag coefficient 0.32
Wheels 10.5Jx20in (f), 11.0Jx21in (r)
Tyres 285/40 ZR20 111Y XL (f), 295/35 ZR21 110Y XL (r), Hankook Ventus F1 Evo Z **Spare** None (mobility foam)

SUSPENSION & STEERING

Front Double wishbones, coil springs, anti-roll bar **Rear** Multi-link, coil springs, anti-roll bar **Steering** EPAS, rack and pinion; 2.25 turns lock to lock; 12.6m turning circle

BRAKES

Front 420mm carbon-ceramic ventilated discs, six-piston calipers
Rear 398mm carbon-ceramic ventilated discs, floating calipers
Handbrake type Electronic, auto

SAFETY

Euro NCAP rating 5 stars (2023, i5)
Adult occupant 89%, child occupant 85%, vulnerable road users 86%, safety assist 78%

EMISSIONS & TAX

CO_2 34g/km
BIK at 20/40% pcm £148/£297

VERDICT

A technical leap, though into troubling territory

★★★½☆

This seventh-generation BMW M5 is easy to criticise – and its best defence may be that it exists at all.

M division has found a way for this car to go on: with a big V8 in its nose, but enough hybrid technology at its disposal to render it commercially viable, and at a price that doesn't beggar belief. Judging by the efforts of some of its rivals, that may be a bigger feat than many realise.

The car's towering real-world performance and stirring performative character, its technologically progressive yet enticing cabin and its touring credentials all appeal, even if its size, weight and unyielding chassis put caveats on driver appeal that previous M5s never laboured under.

This isn't the greatest M5, but it hasn't sold its soul for a place in the showrooms of 2025. If surviving is all it can manage for the time being, hats off to it.

TESTERS' NOTES

MATT SAUNDERS
The M5's engineers say Sport damping mode should be used for fast roads and circuits such as the Nordschleife and Sport Plus exclusively for the smoothest circuits, leaving only Comfort mode for the road.

ILLYA VERPRAET
Light-up kidney grilles ('Iconic Glow') sound naff, but they sort of work. Most remarkably, the M-specific widened arches manage to give the otherwise slightly flabby 5 Series a really purposeful stance.

FACELIFT FIXES

- Smooth out that fast country road ride, even if it comes at the expense of a little outright body control.
- Look long and hard for weight savings.
- A damper hardware upgrade achieved an awful lot for the F90 M5. Could the trick be repeated?

RANKING RIVALS

	1	2	3	4	5	6
				BMW M5 SALOON		
	PORSCHE PANAMERA TURBO E-HYBRID Suppleness and driver appeal a step beyond the BMW's. Huge pace too.	**AUDI RS6 AVANT PERFORMANCE** Iconic mega-wagon is still on the price lists, and now hitting tub-thumping later-life excesses.	**BENTLEY FLYING SPUR V8 S** Phased out with Bentley's last facelift, but lovely. Year-old ones are around for new M5 money.		**MERC-AMG GT 63 S E PERFORMANCE 4 DOOR COUPE** The hybrid super-saloon's nuclear option has plenty of rough edges.	**MASERATI GHIBLI 334 ULTIMA** Special V8 Ghibli bobbed up in 2023, and quickly sold out. A collector's item if you can find one.
	★★★★½	★★★★☆	★★★★☆		★★★½☆	★★★☆☆
Price	£145,400	£117,420	£202,400 (2002)		£184,980	£159,625 (2003)
Power, torque	671bhp, 686lb ft	621bhp, 627lb ft	542bhp, 568lb ft		832bhp, 664lb ft	572bhp, 538lb ft
0-62mph, top speed	3.2sec, 196mph	3.4sec, 174mph	4.1sec, 198mph		2.9sec, 196mph	3.9sec, 207mph
CO_2, economy	26-38g/km, 235.4mpg	286g/km, 22.4mpg	288g/km, 22.2mpg		180g/km, 31.7mpg	286g/km, 22.2mpg

AUTOCAR **ROAD TEST 5722**

SKODA OCTAVIA

Heated-up petrol estate is a refreshingly straightforward throwback

The warmed-up, vRS-badged Octavia has been a stalwart of the 'everyday performance' landscape for more than two decades and during that time has been offered in several flavours, including diesel and, a little more surprisingly, plug-in hybrid.

It was the Mk4, surfacing in 2020, that introduced electrification, and it's the Mk4 that has now been facelifted – at the same time streamlining the model's engine range, leaving only a turbo petrol. We have thus, in a sense, come full circle, only while in 2001 the Mk1 Octavia vRS used an Audi-designed 1.8-litre engine with 180bhp, its great-grandchild has a 2.0-litre unit from Volkswagen, rated at 261bhp. Apart from the 600bhp, factory-prepared machine that hit 228mph on the Bonneville Salt Flats in 2001, in the process securing a land speed record for a 2.0-litre forced-induction production(ish) car, this is the most powerful Octavia vRS there has officially been.

Indeed, that 261bhp is now a match for the close relation to which the Skoda has hitherto declared fealty in the form of less oomph, the Golf GTI. But no longer. That said, if you want, you can go more extreme with the VW: either in the guise of the 296bhp GTI Clubsport or the even more powerful Golf R. With the Octavia, 261bhp through the front wheels alone is your lot.

DESIGN & ENGINEERING

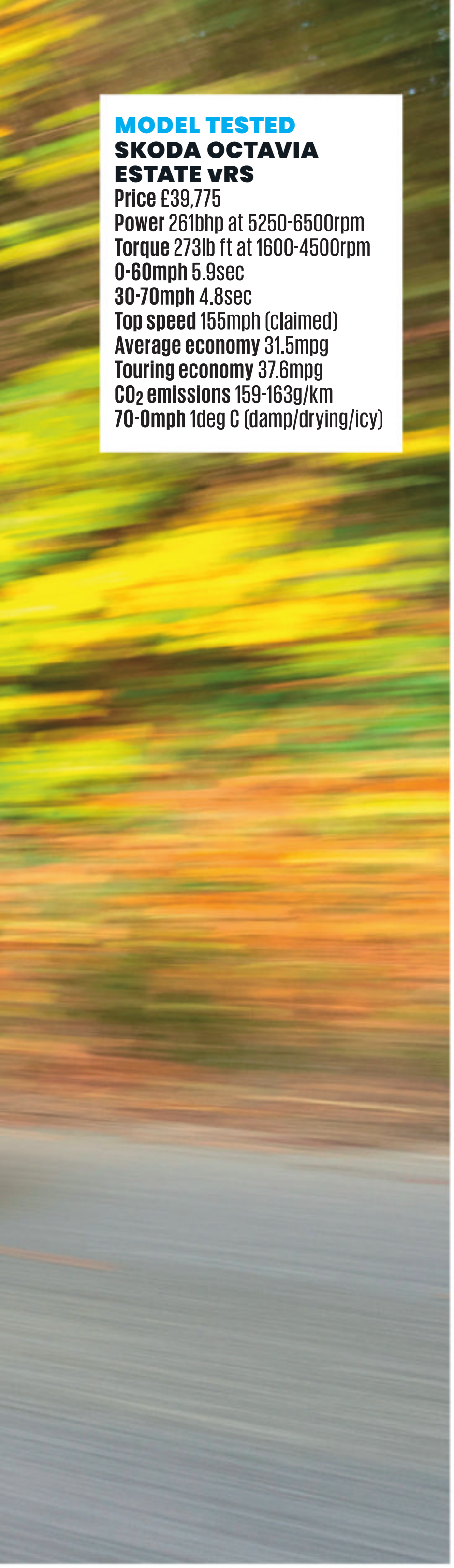
★★★⯨☆

PROS Striking to behold but not obnoxiously so; Golf GTI hardware
CONS No proper limited-slip diff; contact patch a little conservative

At a time when fleet sales are so dependent on CO_2 levels and all-electric driving capability, the decision to drop the pre-facelift car's PHEV powertrain would seem to be a commercial misstep, but Skoda claims the straight petrol was always the best-selling vRS anyway.

This engine is the same familiar EA888 unit found in fast Golfs, and it's mated to a seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox (there's no longer a manual option). The driveline is a direct transplant from the recently updated GTI, with the headline 261bhp arriving at 5250-6500rpm (it was 242bhp pre-facelift) and 273lb ft (unchanged) at 1600-4500rpm.

It means the Golf also donates its Vorderachsquersperre – henceforth VAQ. Skoda describes this as a 'front axle lock' and it is meant to create the same effect as a limited-slip differential. A wet multi-plate clutch is used to link (and lock) the planetary geartrain with the differential cage and ultimately one of the driveshafts, allowing for 'predictive torque management'. This isn't the first time VAQ has appeared on an Octavia vRS and the system is a step on from the ESC-based XDS seen in the past.

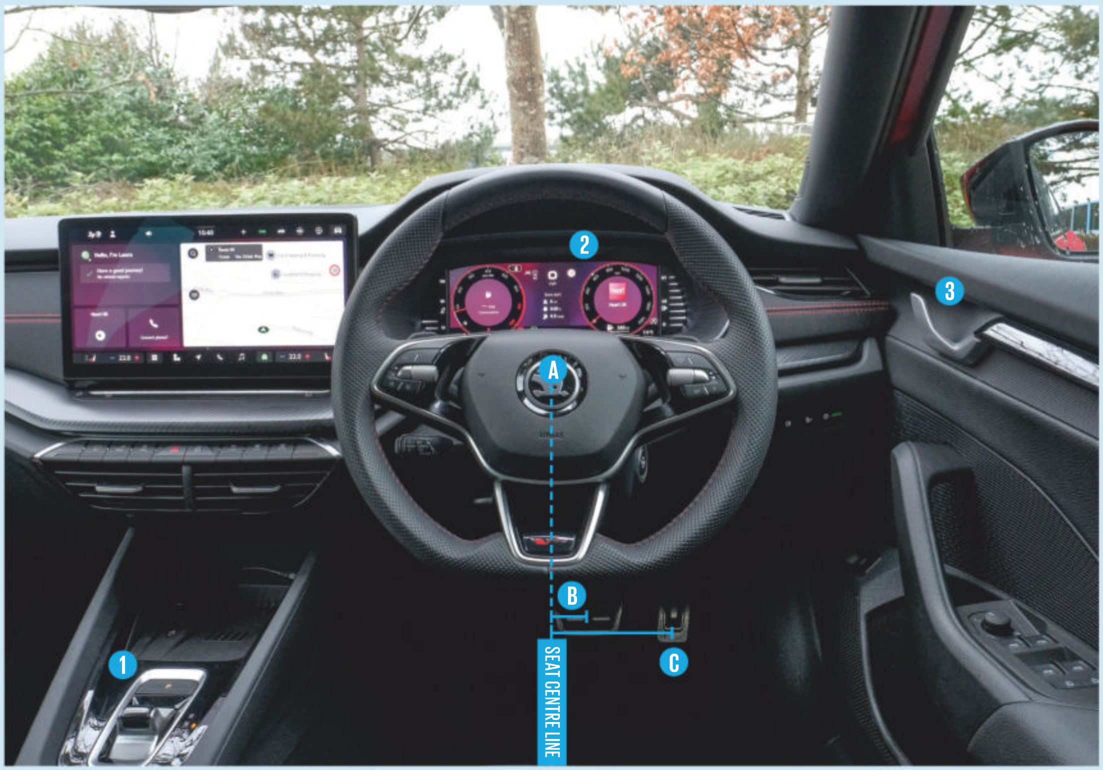


MODEL TESTED
SKODA OCTAVIA ESTATE vRS
Price £39,775
Power 261bhp at 5250-6500rpm
Torque 273lb ft at 1600-4500rpm
0-60mph 5.9sec
30-70mph 4.8sec
Top speed 155mph (claimed)
Average economy 31.5mpg
Touring economy 37.6mpg
CO_2 emissions 159-163g/km
70-0mph 1deg C (damp/drying/icy)

① Gear selector is a stubby toggle and takes up less space than a traditional lever. Note also the wireless phone charger and USB ports ahead of it.

② Digital instrument binnacle has several layouts and some red detailing, but the graphics could have been more exciting given the designers had carte blanche.

③ Cabin has some nice details, such as the door handles. We are also fans of the physical vent adjusters, in an age when so many cars now do it digitally.



WHEEL AND PEDAL ALIGNMENT Ⓐ Steering offset 0mm Ⓑ Brake offset 40mm right Ⓒ Accelerator offset 170mm right. Driving position isn't quite as low-slung as in other hot hatches but it's ergonomically sound.

The vRS isn't simply a fruity powertrain dropped into an otherwise ordinary Octavia, though. Never has been. The facelifted Mk4 cars sit 15mm closer to the road than the garden Octavia, courtesy of shorter springs, which are complemented by vRS-specific dampers. There's also the option of having Skoda's Dynamic Chassis Control adaptive dampers, with their broad scope of adjustability via the central display. Our test car had them. In terms of the contact patch, you're treated to Goodyear Eagle F1 Supersport tyres, the presence of which impressed all of our testers, auguring well for performance and handling.

As for how you identify a facelifted Octavia vRS, look for the angrier headlights and more pronounced creases in the front bumper. The rest of the car is mostly unchanged, though amping up the intimidation factor was never something that concerned the Octavia vRS. That subtly angrier face and the presence of two wide-set exhaust tips are enough to signal to others that this family estate (or fastback, should you wish) isn't likely to be sluggish.

INTERIOR

★★★★☆

PROS Straightforward, spacious and sensibly laid out; great seats
CONS Feels a bit sparse in places for £40k; cloth not to all tastes

There's a quiet maturity and feeling of restraint to the Octavia's cabin but equally you're left in no doubt that this is the sporting flagship of the range.

It starts with the seats, which are modular and bolstered such that they grip you assertively the moment you slide aboard. There's also a good deal of a cotton-esque technical fabric, used for the seats and dashboard. It isn't especially premium in feel, but add in the contrast stitching, a carbon-effect element spanning the width of the cockpit plus the firm, perforated-leather steering wheel and aluminium pedals and you have the basis of something that feels decidedly 'hot hatch', albeit with that quiet maturity, which makes the vRS straightforward, pleasant company. Just don't expect too much in the way of luxury: what's adjustable is manually so, and while the textures and finishes are decently varied and not without interest, there is inevitably a bit of a 'built to a cost' atmosphere.

Elsewhere there's a new 13in touchscreen that is considerably more intuitive that the old, smaller unit and slickly adopts Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. There are, however, still some physical controls above the central vents, and the three-spoke steering wheel has useful scrollers and proper buttons, rather than the haptic touchpads you will find in a Golf GTI. It's also extremely easy to turn off the speed limit recognition and lane keeping – one click brings up a menu in the digital instrument binnacle and another turns the system off. Such ease only adds to the Octavia vRS's faint sense of old-world and uncomplicated charm.

That said, the 'Smart Dial' controls introduced on the new Kodiaq and Superb (which control the air conditioning, volume and more) haven't been included, and we do rather like those.

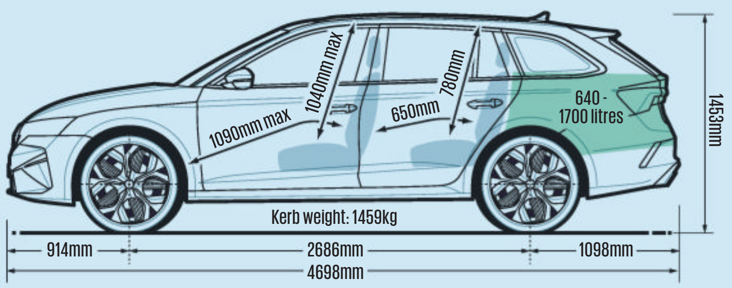
And space? There's plenty. Both for passengers and luggage, especially in the estate, with its 640 litres – 25 litres more than even a Mercedes E-Class estate has. ▸

■ vRS bodywork is more striking than ever, and the interplay of painted and gloss black surfaces is a little Lamborghini-like to our eyes. Subtler colours are also available.

■ Skoda continues to fit its vRS models with wheels that, if you squint, look like they might have been borrowed from a Lambo. These ones are just a bit fussy for our liking, mind.

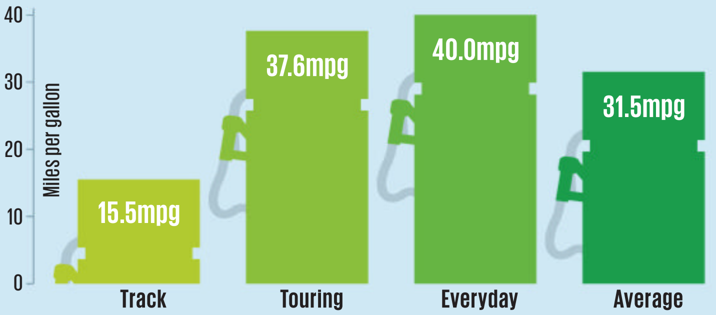
TEST RESULTS

DIMENSIONS



RUNNING EFFICIENCY

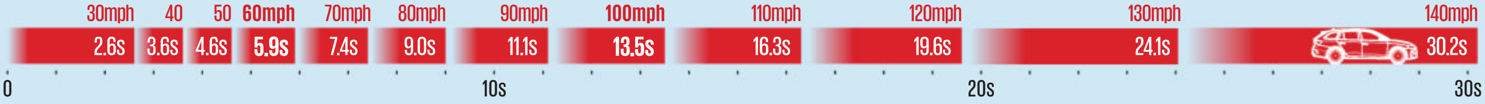
WLTP 39.5-40.3mpg (combined) **Test range** 357/426/453 miles (average/touring/everyday)



ACCELERATION

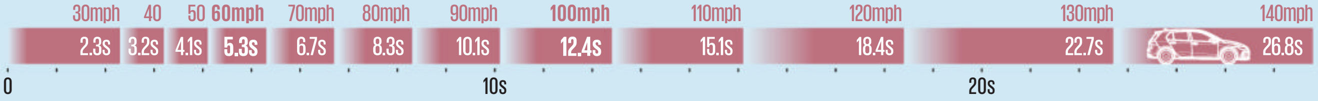
Test conditions 1deg C, damp/drying/icy

Standing quarter mile 14.1sec at 102.7mph **Standing km** 25.4sec at 130.4mph **30-70mph** 4.8sec **30-70mph in fourth** 8.0sec **0-62mph** 6.1sec



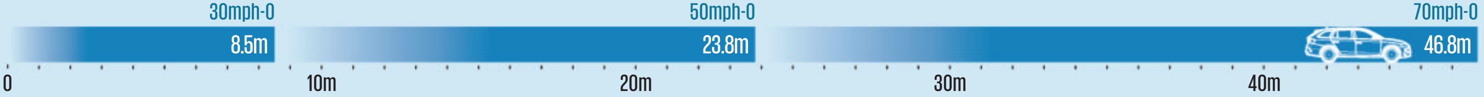
Volkswagen Golf GTI 2024, 19deg C, dry

Standing quarter mile 13.8sec at 105.5mph **Standing km** 24.8sec at 134.2mph **30-70mph** 4.4sec **30-70mph in fourth** 7. 7sec **0-62mph** 5.6sec

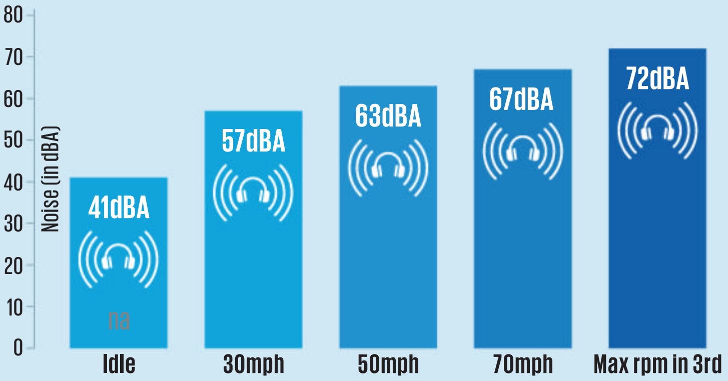


BRAKING

Dry 60-0mph 2.54sec



CABIN NOISE



MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATION

SKODA OCTAVIA ESTATE vRS

On-the-road price £39,775
Price as tested £41,570
Value after 3yrs/36k miles £17,575

ENGINE

Installation Front, transverse, FWD
Type 4 cyls in line, 1984cc, turbocharged, petrol
Power 261bhp at 5250-6500rpm
Torque 273lb ft at 1600-4500rpm
Redline 6800rpm
Specific output 132bhp per litre
Power to weight 179bhp per tonne
Torque to weight 187lb ft per tonne

GEARBOX

Type 7-spd dual-clutch automatic
rpm in top gear at 70/80mph 1790/2046

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction Steel monocoque
Weight/as tested 1459kg/na
Wheels 7.5Jx19in
Tyres 225/40 R19 93Y, Goodyear Eagle F1 Supersport

SUSPENSION & STEERING

Front MacPherson struts, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Steering EPAS, rack and pinion; 2.2 turns lock to lock; 10.4m turning circle

"The vRS has accuracy and composure to spare"

PETER LIDDIARD

For information on the Octavia Estate vRS, contact Skoda Customer Services, Delaware Drive, Blakelands, Milton Keynes, MK14 5AN (03330 037504, skoda.co.uk)

PERFORMANCE

★★★★☆

PROS Quicker than claimed; smooth, predictable delivery

CONS Not especially exciting; traction sometimes an issue

A front-driven performance estate with nothing more complicated than a turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine and a limited-slip differential (sort of) feels like an anachronism in 2025, but it's a refreshing one, no doubt.

There's not a lot of say about the EA888 unit that hasn't already been said, and in this application it continues to offer up torque early and pull cleanly before wilting a little at the very top of its scope. It's an extremely competent performer and lends itself well to the vRS brief, responding adeptly either to the driver gearing up and riding the torque or holding on to gears for longer to enjoy this motor's linear and predictable delivery. The DSG gearbox is a worthy accomplice, if conspicuously less rapid in its machinations than its counterparts in more serious VW Group fare, such as the four-wheel-drive Golf R. Larger, more engaging paddles – like those found on the VW – would also encourage the driver to take manual control more often.

Nonetheless, this is a decently potent powertrain, as our sub-six-second run to 60mph shows. Our 6.1sec to 62mph is a fair bit quicker than the factory claim, and was set in freezing conditions, when the Goodyears wouldn't have been at their best. Indeed, with a 225-section front contact patch (a tad narrower than the Golf GTI's), 261bhp feels about the limit of what this chassis can dependably put down, and means the vRS isn't simply a point-and-shoot proposition. Some modulation of the throttle pedal is often necessary, but rather than being a drawback, most testers found this only adds to the sense of involvement.

RIDE & HANDLING

★★★⯪☆

PROS Quick and assured; can make light work of motorway journeys

CONS A little uninvolving at times; secondary ride a little lacking

If B-road delight is your primary concern, the Octavia vRS shouldn't top your shopping list. In Sport mode it is quick and sure-footed and has a reassuring slice of resistance in the driving controls, but there is something a touch removed and two-dimensional about the way this car moves – and how it communicates those movements – compared with the best cars made in the hot hatch mould. This car is not going to reward you in the same way that, say, the now discontinued Hyundai i30 N would.

However, if you temper your expectations a touch, there is plenty to like here. The vRS has accuracy and composure to spare, and carries speed neatly. In slower corners you occasionally get the impression the VAQ system is having to overthink matters, and that perhaps a little more tyre width would help the vRS considerably, but in faster, flowing bends you can lean on the chassis and chase the throttle. The faint understeer balance can also be difficult to overcome at times but, again, this is not an i30 N, rather a quickish junior estate, and its handling is set up to match the brief.

Ride quality is generally good, and you can set the dampers to their softest (softer than you get in the default Comfort mode) via the display. With the vRS's considerable waft factor unlocked, the car is generally easy company on the motorway. Equally, there's an underlying lack of sophistication that can make the chassis feel a touch brittle on certain surfaces, in a similar way to what we have found in the Golf GTI. It is not something that can be worked around by playing with the dampers and, as with certain elements of the interior, is a reminder that the Octavia is a value proposition, for better and worse.

BUYING & OWNING

★★★★☆

PROS Now in a class of one; plenty of breadth for the money

CONS DCC dampers are an optional extra; CO_2 for company drivers

The vRS costs around £40,000 whether you go for the hatchback or the estate, but the latter is more interesting because it will soon have no true rivals. The Ford Focus ST Estate is on the verge of retirement, VW doesn't offer the Golf GTI in big-boot form and various other alternatives have recently fallen by the wayside. One option is the new Cupra Leon, which is available in a similar estate format to the Octavia and has even more power. However, that car uses a 1.5-litre hybrid powertrain to achieve 268bhp so lacks the simplicity of the Skoda's set-up and costs several thousand pounds more.

As such, the Octavia is a unique proposition; add the DCC dampers for £1185 and you have a broad-batted, driver-centric family car at your disposal. A decently frugal one too. Our touring figure of 37.6mpg equates to a motorway range of 426 miles, and the vRS did even better in our 'everyday' economy test, returning 40.0mpg.

VERDICT

A fine estate made more engaging rather than a great hot hatch made a bit bigger

★★★★☆

The hottish junior family wagon has always been something of a niche concept, but it has spawned some fine cars in the past and we're glad that Skoda is keeping the flame burning with the facelifted Octavia. This car doesn't have the dynamic polish of the best hot hatches in recent memory but it has strength enough in the right areas – performance, composure, practicality – to earn a solid recommendation from us. And while the pricing may at first seem to have strayed a little from Skoda's traditional value-focused angle, this vRS still undercuts what opposition remains.

RIVALS

1

FORD FOCUS ST
From £37,705
★★★★⯪

2

CUPRA LEON ESTATE
From £44,400
★★★★☆

3 **SKODA OCTAVIA**

4

VW GOLF GTI
From £40,025
★★★⯪☆

Autocar
SHOW REPORT
THE LIGHT FANTASTIC
NEW PORSCHE 928S4 TESTED
The Autocar
WHAT REALLY MATTERED IN 2018
AUTOCAR
ROAD TEST YEARBOOK
AUDI'S TESLA
The Autocar
Entirely New Anglia
FORD
DURON BRAKE LININGS
CAR & GENERAL INSURANCE CORPORATION
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Pumped-up hot hatch tops rel
More power and pace
Why this is the new Fiesta
secret Porsche rival
The crazy supercar that's 3D-printed
Big Jimmy: the cheap 4x4 you really want
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Autocar
ANCIENT & MODERN
Tested: 1896 Lutzmann
1978 Renault

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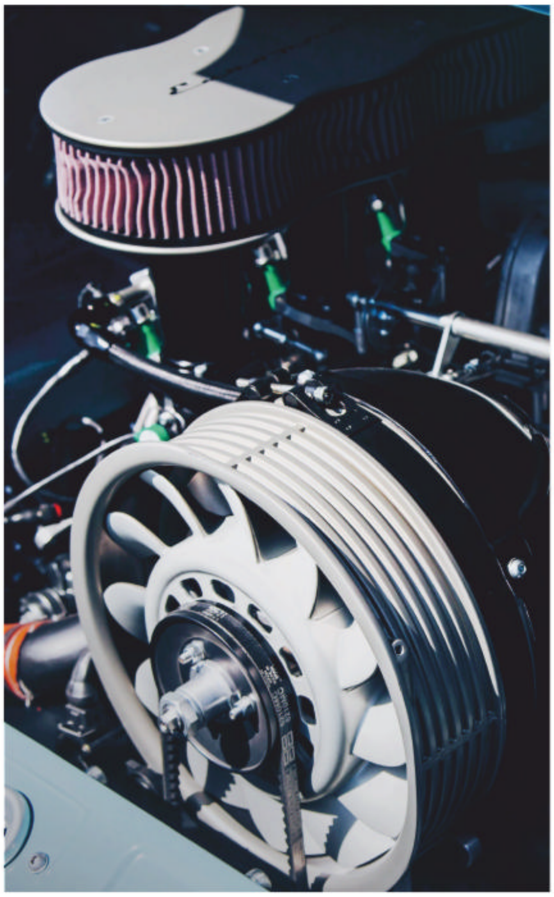
RICHARD LANE

Testing, testing



Simon Thornley wields Hal Walter's hefty 911 manifesto

Bespoke restomod projects are all the rage today, and this is no great surprise. Over-familiarity will have led to a weary cynicism in many of us, but equally who among us, given the time and means, wouldn't love to have a crack at creating our dream car? To set out with no commercial imperative and draft a grand vision, then obsess over the details such that the end result fitted our wants and needs like a glove? It's fantasy stuff.

What I hadn't appreciated until recently was the kind of person you need to be to pull it off to convincing effect, even before you've pinned down a team of the calibre required for expert engineering and fabrication – the people who will slowly bring your vision to life. Most of us would be better served keeping the dream confined to a beer mat and chasing after ready-to-wear options from Ariel or Ferrari. It makes the 0.0001% of wonder-machines that do become a reality as world-class, from-the-ground-up commissions all the more tantalising. Projects like Thornley Kelham's recent European RS.

"Hal could walk into the prep shop, look at his car from a distance of 10 feet and tell you the sill line is two millimetres out," says Simon Thornley, co-founder of what is certainly an elite but under-the-radar British restoration company. "And he'd be right. That was the scary thing."

Hal Walter is a retired Australian architect who spends half his time in the Alps. This partly explains why his commission took the form of a 911 restomod blending the spirit of a 1973 2.7-litre RS and the more recent 997-generation GT3 RS 4.0, which he also owns (of course he does).

> **"The level of detail in this tome was just a little bit unnerving"**

It was an ambitious concept, but Walter is a man for details – every last one of them. Shortly after Thornley Kelham agreed to take on the project, a near-40-page document arrived: the instruction manual. When we visited the firm's premises last year to see and drive the 95%-finished European RS, Thornley produced a printout and dropped it onto a table. It landed with a pronounced slap. "This is about the fourth version," he said. "We're now on version 23."

The level of detail in this tome was exquisite, inspiring, just a little unnerving and perhaps understandable for a man with an architect's mind and many, many hundreds of thousands of pounds on the line. Part prescriptive (one can't help but admire the inclusion of gear ratios), it took more of a manifesto form elsewhere. The intake needs to wail like this, the chassis balance should feel like that and so on. The car will weigh such and such in full running order (start with an original 911 T chassis, please, rather than a commonly used 964 one, as it will save us 300kg). There was also the design, both inside and out. The showstopping aesthetics of the European RS, down to the split-level ducktail, are mostly Walter's handiwork. It's hard not to be impressed.

"The guy is a bloody perfectionist. We were painting things to concours standard that you will never see," said Thornley, who himself had a 2.7-litre RS for decades. He jokes about the hardest part of this mesmerising project being 'the owner' and is vindicated when his phone starts buzzing away during our chat. Guess who.

But the truth is that he and business partner Wayne Kelham are as mad about the details as Walter, and this really is a multi-disciplinary business. It isn't solely turning out modified old 911s, as shown by the magnificent, fully restored Lamborghini Miura in one of the workshops. Adjacent to it was a Bugatti Type 40, and an engine-building facility sits across the road where, among other jewels, fettled 300bhp Virgilio V6s are prepped before being dropped into Thornley Kelham's hot-rod take on Lancia's B20 GT Aurelia. The presence of English wheels warms the heart, so too the shell of a Citroën SM. The place is a toy box – one in which any project, no matter how whimsical, can fully materialise.

It was thus well placed to deliver something on the level of the European RS. But listening to Thornley, I still couldn't help wondering if the reality could live up to the expectation – to the painstaking planning in Walter's paperwork and his huge emotional investment in the project.

As it happens, when you're this committed and enlist just the right people, magic unfolds. The car is a hand-built masterpiece, its delivery of 380bhp from 3.7 litres of flat six feeling utterly open-ended and the integration of 997 GT3-style linkages into a feather-light chassis giving the handling adjustability reminiscent of today's 992 GT3, only dialled up. And the details. Good grief, they're fabulous. I'd love to think I could've masterminded such a car, but in truth? Hmm.

WHERE WE'RE GOING, WE DON'T NEED ROADS

Which is the best off-roader on sale today: Land Cruiser, Defender or Grenadier? **MATT SAUNDERS** dons his wellies

PHOTOGRAPHY JACK HARRISON

TOYOTA
74 ZGU
LG73 XHK

We may not be in the same league as the indigenous peoples of North America when talking about snow, or those of the Middle East about sand. But depending on which regional dialect you zoom in on, you may find as many as 30 synonyms for mud in the various tongues of the British Isles.

Clag, clart, gunk, mire, ooze – call it what you will, it seems we are notorious global experts on it. And we're looking at the full glorious spectrum of it today, in an old Rutland limestone quarry criss-crossed with tracks and paths. This is exactly the kind of place we need to be to settle a question posed by the arrival of the new, J250-generation Toyota Land Cruiser. Here and now, which is the best, toughest and most capable road-legal, dual-purpose off-roading 4x4 on sale?

It will take plenty of climbing, descending, articulating, crawling, fording, squelching and squeezing to know. In the way of the new Toyota stands some very serious opposition. The Ineos Grenadier and Land Rover Defender are cars whose stories are irrevocably intertwined. The first is close enough in design and concept to the original Series Land Rover as to feel almost like an unsanctioned restomod. The second is the long-awaited official sequel model similar in spirit but altered in execution – much to the apparent approval of the SUV-buying public.

The Grenadier – with its ladder frame, rigid beam axles, recirculating ball steering and three locking mechanical differentials – could be called studiously traditional. The Defender – with its monocoque chassis and independent suspension, actively managed air springs, 'intelligent' driveline (itself with two active locking diffs) and myriad Terrain Response off-road driving modes – is fully committed to the technological avant garde.

We wanted both in their most capable guises, which is why we've got a short-wheelbase Defender 90 D350 (with optional air suspension and configurable Terrain Response driveline, active rear differential and all-terrain tyres) and a Grenadier 3.0T petrol Trialmaster (with optional Rough Pack consisting of locking diffs front and rear, and BF Goodrich all-terrain tyres).

But can either prove itself to be superior, both off the road and on it, to the inheritor of probably the toughest automotive reputation in all motordom? The new Land Cruiser comes to us in 2.8 D-4D First Edition form, with locking rear diff and disconnecting front anti-roll bar as standard, optional Yokohama all-terrain tyres and a suspiciously Camel Trophy-looking shade of Metallic Sand paint.

"For a months-long jungle expedition along rutted tracks, I'd prefer the Land Cruiser"

Defender 90 has the best approach, breakover and departure angles of the trio

Longer wheelbases of the Toyota and Ineos blunt breakover ability

SIZING THEM UP

You might not expect a modern Land Rover to be capable of playing the little guy in any Autocar comparison exercise – but just look at this one.

Ineos has no plans for a short-wheelbase Grenadier. Toyota remains mute about any possibility of a short-wheelbase J250 Land Cruiser. So if you want a car with a shorter wheelbase naturally better suited to off-roading in the first place (check out the breakover angles on p45 for proof of the difference it makes), the Land Rover has a big advantage straight away.

That you don't see so many Defender 90s on the road probably tells you plenty about how much off-roading buyers of this car actually have in mind (although a 110 remains a seriously capable 4x4, as it has proven on these pages before). Still, what more can Land Rover do? If you want one, have one. It's choice. As far as Toyota, Ineos and the impact on the result of this group test are concerned, choice may well turn out to be something of a bitch.

More fortunately for others, that isn't the only natural advantage that applies here. Not counting its mirrors, the Ineos is 1930mm wide, or 50mm narrower than the Toyota and nearly 70mm skinnier than the Land Rover. When it comes to threading it between rocks and through gaps, that could make a difference, as could the fact that you sit a little higher at the wheel of the Grenadier, with a clearer view of the extremities of the car and its straighter, more sheer sides.

Equally, though, the Grenadier's near-3.0m wheelbase makes me worry for its manoeuvrability. But it does have lots of practical touches that are ideal for off-road use, such as outsized switchgear that you can easily operate with a gloved hand, and drainage holes so you can hose out muddy floors and footwells.

For all its size, the Grenadier's cabin packaging isn't really a patch on that of the Land Cruiser, which offers seven seats as standard and plenty of room in rows one and two. But the Ineos does seem like a car designed and built expressly for off-roading, in a way that so many 'off-roaders' don't. When you make the interior muddy, as inevitably happens on these occasions, you don't think you're doing the Grenadier a disservice, whereas the Land Rover's cabin is so neat and lovely that you feel like you're defiling it.

MUD AND THUNDER

Eyes down, wellies on and low range engaged, then. How do these cars compare as conveyances ready to take you a long, long way off road?

If you want the minutiae of this, you should refer to the results breakdown of particular tests of off-road capability on p47 (or, if you like a more visual medium, Matt Prior's excellent video on YouTube). This will sound like a cop-out but ▸

Saunders finds the going relatively easy in the Toyota on this section

Ineos's length and more limited steering angle are telling on tight trails

◂ there really isn't one outstanding off-roader here. There are at least two – and the worst might even be the most fit-for-purpose car of the trio.

For climbing – scaling steep Scottish fells mountain rescue-style and needing unwavering confidence that no gradient will be beyond you – take the Defender. The sheer grip, security and controllability it has in extremis put it in a league of one in so many ways.

That doesn't only make driving it easier. It also gives you options. If you need to pick your way slowly up a muddy slope, or stop, roll back and then restart, you can. The Land Rover's clever active driveline and suspension seem to be able to read your mind. It will lock and unlock its active diffs, pump down a wheel to find contact with the ground and recalibrate its stability control without you even knowing it's happening. And it simply could not be easier or more reassuring to drive, for which – when you are at 40deg, in perilous circumstances and, I dunno, perhaps want to keep your passengers from panicking – there's probably an awful lot to be said.

Then again… if I were setting out on a three-month-long jungle expedition along rutted and cratered tracks, and across makeshift bridges and shallow rivers, I think I'd prefer the Land Cruiser – and the Grenadier would make at least a fairly close rival for the Defender.

For wheel articulation – a factor much more likely to define an off-roader's ability to avoid becoming beached on a rock, bank or tree stump than static ground clearance – the Grenadier does very well indeed. Its cantilevered axles move as one, reaching out below on one side as the opposing wheel is compressed, to better cradle the car's body than most independent suspension systems ever could.

It's a car you have to drive very deliberately, though. Decide up front how many levers to throw and buttons to press, and then live with your decisions for both good and bad. You often find the right way to proceed via trial and error, and in spite of a pretty terrible turning circle that only gets worse when you start locking diffs.

The Ineos has other shortcomings. When it's climbing steeply, the petrol engine can come up a little short for accessible torque and start to bog down. It feels heavier than its rivals too – because it is, by some 400kg.

But it does feel like the default off-roading enthusiast's choice here – the one you might get the biggest kick out of from successfully scaling the north face of the Eiger in because, a bit like some lightweight sports car, it tells you very clearly when you're operating it well, and when you're not.

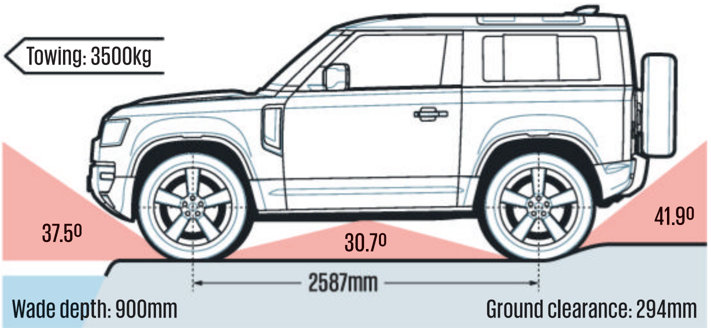
As for the Toyota? Crikey, it just gets on with it. That long rear overhang would be easy to clout on rocks or ridges and the breakover ▸

"For scaling steep Scottish fells with unwavering confidence, take the Land Rover Defender"

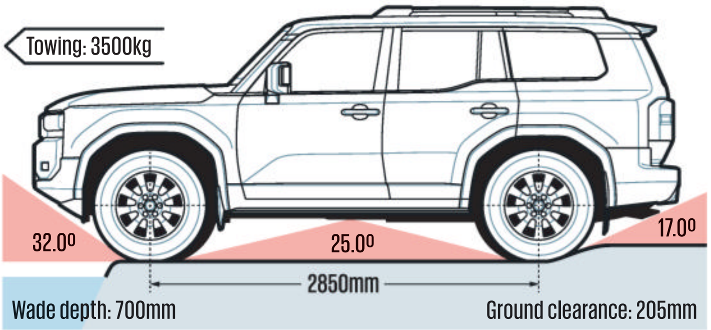
Toyota is capable of soaking up punishment and still delivering

Grenadier and new Defender share a spiritual forebear

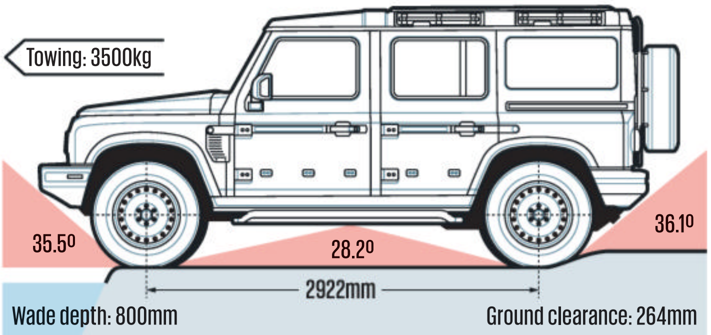
THE VITAL STATISTICS


Towing: 3500kg
37.5°
30.7°
41.9°
2587mm
Wade depth: 900mm
Ground clearance: 294mm

Land Rover Defender 90 D350 X-Dynamic SE


Towing: 3500kg
32.0°
25.0°
17.0°
2850mm
Wade depth: 700mm
Ground clearance: 205mm

Toyota Land Cruiser 2.8 D-4D 204 First Edition


Towing: 3500kg
35.5°
28.2°
36.1°
2922mm
Wade depth: 800mm
Ground clearance: 264mm

Ineos Grenadier 3.0T Trialmaster

Wading depth of the Land Cruiser is the shallowest, at 700mm

Normally, we clean cars before photographing them. Not this time

PETER LIDDIARD

“The Ineos Grenadier leads the pack for axle articulation”

◂ angle makes the underbody a bit vulnerable. But somehow, it doesn’t seem to matter. Find a car with a greater appetite for punishment than this, I dare you.

Having so much torque at low revs, that four-cylinder engine is incredibly well suited to grunting around up slopes and over obstacles. It combines superbly well with a torque-converter gearbox that itself winds up like some kinetic snatch tow rope to twang the drive through, multiplying it usefully at low revs. You seldom need more than 2500rpm to get where you intend in this car – and, thanks to the new electromechanical power steering system, it’s so much easier to steer than the lumpy, inconsistent-feeling tiller of the Grenadier.

The Land Cruiser’s electronics for the traction, suspension and diff don’t feel as clever as the Defender’s but, with just a bit of forethought, the end result is mostly the same. And you would bet on it being the same 99 days out of 100, in the harshest and most remote places on the planet. Because, despite its fairly plush cabin and selectable drive modes, there’s really only as much complexity to the Toyota as it absolutely needs – and that familiar, striking sense of mechanical robustness that neither the Defender nor the Grenadier can quite match is present in abundance.

TIME TO HIT THE ROAD

Off road, then, this contest is one of particular horses – or heavy-laden, hard-working draft bullocks, if you prefer – for courses. For a clear winner, we will have to look to the road, where, I have to say, the outcome becomes a lot plainer.

We have touched on the daily-use practicality, comfort and ownership appeal of these cars a little already. As a 90, the Land Rover would be a bit of a pain for families because of the back-row entry and exit rigmarole. The boot feels a bit like opening a bank vault’s door on the interior of a music box. But so what? Ninety per cent of this car’s off-road capability is fathoms more than you will probably ever need. Just have a 110 instead.

The Land Rover’s interior is certainly the most inviting and pleasant place here. It’s followed at least fairly closely by the Toyota’s (roomy, solid, comfortable and well furnished, though not in any way rich or luxurious) and really rather distantly by the Ineos’s (a little perched and tight-feeling up front, comfortable enough – just – for adults in the back, with quite a cleverly configured and roomy split tailgate boot, but very deliberately short on frippery and decoration).

So, on balance, the Land Cruiser looks like it might just force its way to the head of the field initially – until the driving starts. That’s when the clattery drone of the Toyota’s long-stroke four-cylinder diesel engine starts to contrast starkly with the muted hum of the Land Rover’s straight six. Then the slightly fiddly, fidgety, body-on-frame ride of the Land Cruiser, improved though it may be relative to the old car, contrasts with the more settled, smooth, quiet and fluent ride of the Defender. And the ability of the Land Rover to hunker down a little on its air springs and corner amazingly sweetly on that shortened wheelbase just takes the test away from the inevitably ▸

Land Cruiser’s diesel is torquey from low revs – but you can gun it for fun

HOW THEY FARED IN OUR OFF-ROAD TESTS

TOYOTA
GX74 ZGU

MANOEUVRABILITY

It's a bit of a myth that off-roading is all about wide, open spaces. It's as often done on green lanes, through forests and along river valleys. Agility and manoeuvrability are key where tight turns are unavoidable and there's often something in your way.

On a densely wooded, twisting track, every one of our three test cars was made to feel wide. None avoided the need to reverse entirely at least a couple of junctures in order to proceed. So the difference between good and bad here wasn't huge.

But predictably the relative shortness of the Defender's wheelbase and its generous amount of steering angle gave it a clear advantage over the only averagely wieldy Land Cruiser, while the length of the Grenadier's wheelbase, its shortage of steering angle and its higher-effort steering weight made it clearly the most awkward.

Defender ★★★★☆
Grenadier ★★⯪☆☆
Land Cruiser ★★★⯪☆

CLIMBING AND CRAWLING

The Land Rover's clearance angles give it a sizeable material advantage over its competitors here when it comes to getting onto and off steep gradients – not to mention climbing them, where deep ruts, rocks and momentum-sapping holes often make passage difficult, limiting approach speed. Grip, traction and controllability are what deliver you to the top in the end.

The all-terrain tyres fitted to all three test cars ultimately made each of them capable of scaling a rocky, muddy, 100ft incline that probably approached 100% gradient at its cruellest.

The Defender's 516lb ft of torque combined with outstanding traction control and active driveline management to make it the most assured of the three in this test. But the Toyota's sheer accessibility of torque and a transmission perfectly suited to off-roading placed it a close second.

The Grenadier's notable weight penalty and the tendency of its petrol engine to bog down at lower revs caused it to struggle the most here.

Defender ★★★★⯪
Grenadier ★★★⯪☆
Land Cruiser ★★★★☆

ARTICULATION

This is what 4x4 hobbyists get most excited about: axle articulation. What we are talking about here is the ability of an off-roader to get its wheels on the ground over extremely rutted and cratered terrain or rock crawls and deliver forward impetus in a way that seems to defy the posture of the body suspended above.

Thanks to its ladder-frame chassis (which can twist independently of the body), its beam axles (which cantilever over to support the car) and its progressive-rate springs, the Grenadier leads the pack here. It drops its wheels deep into holes with real dexterity.

The body-on-frame Land Cruiser should, on paper, be almost as good but its shortage of breakover and departure clearance caused it to ground in places, without preventing it from proceeding.

Carefully managed by its drivability electronics and armed with great clearance angles, the Defender came through fairly easily, though with more body roll than the Grenadier and the occasional dangling wheel.

Defender ★★★★☆
Grenadier ★★★★⯪
Land Cruiser ★★★⯪☆

THE MUDSLIDE: WHERE DUSTER BEATS DEFENDER

One of the most fearsome-looking tests in our quarry is a slope about 100ft wide and with perhaps a 50-75% gradient. It's relatively free of ruts and holes but thick with wet mud. It looks like the sort of slope your kids might hurl themselves down at a village fete, if only it was inflatable and made out of rubber.

In a test of outright traction, we challenged our cars to get halfway up, stop and then restart and get to the top. All of them managed to – the Defender narrowly the easiest, the heavier Grenadier with the most trouble.

But putting them all to shame was a Dacia Duster 4x4 we had also brought along. Its relatively skinny all-season Continental tyres cut through the wet mud brilliantly and it needed no more than 170lb ft, first gear and a 'locked 4x4' driveline mode to haul up its flyweight 1390kg.

It proved that when it comes to climbing on a fairly even but very slippery surface, traction is your friend and weight your mortal enemy.

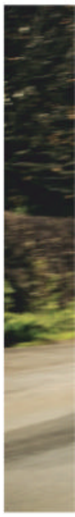
DACIA DUSTER 1.2 TCE 130 EXTREME 4x4
Price £25,620
Power 129bhp at 4500rpm
Torque 170lb ft at 1750rpm
Kerb weight 1390kg
Approach/breakover/departure angles 31deg/24deg/36deg
Ground clearance 217mm

Defender was the best of our trio on this test but no match for a Duster

WATCH THE VIDEO

Defender provides the most accomplished drive on the road

Compromises of Ineos's trad off-road make-up are apparent on the road



	LAND ROVER DEFENDER 90 D350 X-DYNAMIC SE	TOYOTA LAND CRUISER 2.8 D-4D 204 FIRST EDITION	INEOS GRENADIER 3.0T TRIALMASTER
Rating	★★★★⯪	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
Price	£63,290	£77,195	£76,620
Engine	6 cyls in line, 2997cc, turbocharged, diesel, plus 48V ISG	4 cyls in line, 2755cc, turbocharged, diesel	6 cyls in line, 2998cc, turbocharged, petrol
Power	345bhp at 4000rpm	202bhp at 3400rpm	282bhp at 4750rpm
Torque	516lb ft at 1500-3000rpm	369lb ft at 1600-2800rpm	332lb ft at 1750-4000rpm
Gearbox	8-spd automatic, 4WD; centre and rear active locking diffs	8-spd automatic, 4WD; centre and rear active locking diffs	8-spd automatic, 4WD; centre, rear and front locking diffs
Wheels and tyres	8.5Jx20in; 255/60 R20 113Q, Goodyear Wrangler Duratrac	8.0Jx18in; 265/65 R18 114H, Yokohama Geolandar A/T G015	8.0Jx18in; 255/70 R18 117/4S, BF Goodrich All-Terrain T/A KO2
Kerb weight	2241kg	2335kg	2741kg
0-62mph	6.2sec	10.9sec	8.6sec
Top speed	119mph	102mph	99mph
Economy	33.6mpg	26.4mpg	18.9-19.6mpg
Fuel tank	89 litres	80 litres	90 litres
CO_2, tax band	224g/km, 37%	280g/km, 37%	325-336g/km, 37%

2ND A diamond-hard, utterly unstoppable 4x4 as only Toyota can make, though the softer usability edges are apparent.

3RD Mixes hardcore off-road hobbyist appeal with some practical touches and works well in the right setting. But the road definitely isn't it.

1ST Edges the result off road; blitzes it in a wider sense. Surely one of the most versatile new cars in the world.

Ride of the body-on-frame Land Cruiser can feel a little restless

◂ more ponderous and less biddable Toyota.

Where's the Grenadier? Best not to ask. This car has the sort of handling and steering on the road that would make you assume it must be utterly peerless off it – and probably a little disappointed to learn the reality, however nuanced it may be.

That recirculating ball steering has such a dearth of centre feel and positivity that steering dead ahead is a job of constant correction and exiting tighter bends requires as much input as entering them. The ride is fairly soft and settled enough, and though it's notably noisier at a cruise than either the Toyota or the Land Rover, its BMW-sourced straight six does at least give the car motorway performance that an original Land Rover could only dream of. But it's always compromised, not very modern-feeling and a little uncouth.

What the Grenadier ably does, as much as this may infuriate some of the key people who created it, is to illustrate by contrast what a world-class bit of engineering and shining example of technological leadership the modern Defender is. If the latter had to win this test on off-road ability alone, it would have – with its singular drivability, traction and dependable composure in any terrain. But take into account its stunning breadth of dynamic ability as a road car, its desirability as a product and its understated luxury appeal, and its superiority remains utterly clear and totally undeniable.

The Toyota Land Cruiser is very good and the Ineos Grenadier at least singular and different. But the Land Rover Defender proves that an outstanding dual-purpose on- and off-road remit can be served without bad manners, rough edges or comfort compromises. It's a car that has clearly already won its commercial success, but it also continues, rather vividly, to earn it. A

Grime and punishment

If you're not willing to pit your expensive new off-roader against Mother Nature, consider these hardy used alternatives instead, says **CHARLIE MARTIN**

JEEP CHEROKEE (XJ)

If your idea of holidaying isn't heading to a log cabin in the New Forest but a great Texan ranch, this is the one for you.

The 4.0-litre petrol straight six offered until the end of the Cherokee's production run is renowned for its dependability, although it doesn't have much in the way of grunt. The 2.5-litre diesel from Italian firm VM Motori is good, too.

If you want a Cherokee, move fast: age has claimed many examples and those that survive are rapidly climbing in price.

ONE WE FOUND 2000 Jeep Cherokee 4.0 Orvis, 133,500 miles, £9995

GREEN LANE HEROES

FIAT PANDA 4x4

A suspension lift and four-wheel drive (by viscous coupling) turned Fiat's city car into a surprisingly capable machine. Its dinky proportions, narrow wheels and superb interior visibility make it a great option for green-laning in particular.

Two engines were offered: earlier cars got a 1.2-litre petrol unit with 60bhp and 75lb ft, whereas the later 4x4 Cross packed a 1.3-litre turbo diesel with 75bhp and 107lb ft. Neither is fast (the petrol dispatches the 0-62mph sprint in a full 20.0sec and the diesel cuts that by only 2.0sec), but the donkey's extra grunt is useful for more serious mud-plugging.

Watch out for rust and make sure everything specific to the 4x4 – especially the bumpers and the viscous coupling – is in working order. Many Panda 4x4s have already been consigned to the scrapheap because they're uneconomical to repair, and nice examples are now in fairly short supply.

To that end, expect to pay anywhere from £500 for a knackered car you can use as a parts donor or restoration project to £5000 for an immaculate one-owner Cross.

ONE WE FOUND 2010 Fiat Panda 4x4 Cross, 58,500 miles, £3500

TOYOTA LAND CRUISER AMAZON

Superlative reliability, comfort and cool factor – especially nowadays – all make the 'J100' Cruiser, sold here from 1998-2007, incredibly compelling.

Unfortunately, the market agrees. Its place in the off-road hall of fame means you will have to stump up a five-figure sum for one that isn't a wreck, and nice ones nudge £20,000.

Mind you, with the value of the yen in freefall after the Covid pandemic, there's an opportunity to save a few quid by importing one from Japan, where low-milers go for the equivalent of £13,000 or so.

ONE WE FOUND 2003 Toyota Land Cruiser Amazon 4.7 VX, 162,000 miles, £11,995

MORE TOUGH MUDDERS

TOYOTA FJ CRUISER

Toyota was late to the party after the early-noughties wave of retro-futurism, but the FJ was worth the wait. It's just as capable and dependable as the rest of the Land Cruiser family, and those looks (harking back to the FJ40) are utterly lovable. It was never sold here officially but imports are plentiful, starting at £15k.

RANGE ROVER (P38A)

This is the black sheep of the Range Rover family, with the shortest lifespan and a well-earned reputation for unreliability. They are tremendous when they do work, though, and their modern-classic status justify prices north of £10k. A sub-£1000 rotter could be an interesting candidate for restoration.

DACIA DUSTER

With prices starting at £1500, the Duster is so cheap that you won't mind landing it in a ditch. Yet it's also so capable that you probably won't. Stick with a four-wheel-drive diesel and you will struggle to find places it won't go. Genuine rally pedigree means there's plenty of specialised kit, like snorkels, out there too.

MERCEDES-BENZ UNIMOG

If you don't want to simply traverse terrain but pummel it into submission, this is your wagon. No, Unimogs aren't cars – and you will need an HGV licence to drive one – but they are as cool and capable as 4x4s get. Expect to spend around £30,000 (plus VAT) on a modern-ish example.

HUMMER H3

Like it or not, the Hummer is a nailed-on design classic. Few cars can turn heads (or attract scowls) quite like America's flying brick, and the success of the new electric version across the pond proves its enduring appeal.

Ignoring that, there's still plenty to like about the H3: it can wade through more than two feet of water and has an impressive approach angle of 60deg.

It is absolutely hopeless on the road, but you could accuse a classic Land Rover of similar…

ONE WE FOUND 2008 Hummer H3 3.7 V6 Luxury, 55,500 miles, £12,000

SUZUKI GRAND VITARA

The third-generation Vitara was wholly average in its day, but it did have an ace up its sleeve. As standard, it got a proper full-time four-wheel drive system with a locking centre differential and a set of low-speed gears – rare virtues for a mass-market SUV built after the millennium.

As such, tackling the rough stuff in a Grand Vitara is little drama, especially once you've fitted a proper set of off-road tyres. You can even find suspension lift kits for them, although such modifications are liable to ruin a car's on-road manners.

You can choose from either a three- or a five-door body; the smaller of the two is what you will want for outright manoeuvrability, although it does trade away rather a lot of boot space.

Four engines were offered, but it's best to stick with Suzuki's own 2.4-litre petrol or the 1.9-litre diesel that it borrowed from Renault. Anything smaller is a little too wheezy for comfort.

Prices range from under £1000 for one well past its use-by date to around £7000 for a later car with low mileage.

ONE WE FOUND 2008 Suzuki Grand Vitara 1.9 DDiS 5dr, 82,500 miles, £3995

137
WOB PD 80H

VOLKSWAGEN ILTIS

This German military Jeep is said to have inspired the creation of Audi's famed Quattro system. Legend has it that one was being used as a support vehicle on a winter test in Sweden when Audi engineers noticed just how much more capable it was in the snow than its own front-driven prototypes. The rest is history.

Examples of the Iltis are incredibly rare (significantly more so than ex-military Jeeps, Land Rovers or Humvees), you will have to cross the Channel to find one and clean examples aren't cheap, but hey, when are you ever going to see another?

ONE WE FOUND 1988 Volkswagen Iltis, 38,000 miles, £12,500

RENAULT SCENIC RX4

We have no idea what Renault's board was smoking when it signed off this odd cross-breed of an MPV and a proper 4x4, but we're glad it did.

The RX4 sat 210mm higher than the regular Scenic, added 4WD by way of a viscous coupling and even got a mean-looking wide-body package.

It was shockingly capable, despite its humble origins, but that didn't translate into sales success. Shoppers met it with sheer bewilderment, both for its looks and (at the time) sky-high price of almost £20,000.

Today they're nearer £1000, but replacement parts are almost impossible to find.

ONE WE FOUND 2001 Renault Scenic RX4 2.0 Sport Alize, 144,000 miles, £1200

EVEN MORE TOUGH MUDDERS

LAND ROVER FREELANDER

This late '90s soft-roader melded tough-yet-cute looks with cheerful Rover engines and an affordable price. It was capable enough for light duty too, moonlighting in the G4 Challenge series – the continuation of the famed Camel Trophy. Rust has thinned the herd but nice early cars, from £3000, are nailed-on modern classics.

SKODA OCTAVIA SCOUT

This rufty-tufty version of one of our favourite family estates got a 31mm suspension lift, Haldex four-wheel drive and plenty of plastic body cladding. It's more than enough to do the job on the kinds of muddy roads you will have to cross out in the country and doesn't compromise its on-road manners. Nice ones will set you back about £10k.

TOYOTA RAV4 (Mk1)

A similar deal to the Freelander above but a bit smaller and with the bonus of Toyota's famous reliability. The RAV4 can double as something of a hot hatch when fitted with the uprated 2.0-litre four-pot that was also used in the contemporary Celica and MR2, although this powerplant was exclusive to Japan. Get one from £1500 before they're all gone.

MITSUBISHI PAJERO EVOLUTION

This isn't the farmer's hack that most Pajeros (or Shoguns, as we know them) are but a proper Dakar Rally homologation special. As well as a tremendous bodykit, it got a gutsy 276bhp 3.5-litre V6 and Recaro bucket seats. It wasn't ever offered in the UK but there are a few imports kicking about, priced at around £30k.

PORSCHE CAYENNE

No, we aren't kidding with this one. You see, the first Cayenne came about in an era when SUVs still had to tick the 'utility' box, so it can do the business off road. And their relative disposability (prices start at just £3000 for working examples) means they often do end up pressed into action by those with a sense of humour and money to burn.

The most sensible pick is probably the 3.0-litre diesel V6 that was introduced in 2009, but none of them will be cheap to fix when – not if – they go bang, so why not opt for the snorting turbo petrol V8?

ONE WE FOUND
2004 Porsche Cayenne Turbo, 91,000 miles, £5500

I did it byway

If you haven't taken a 4x4 off road or green-laning, you should. Enthusiast **MATT PRIOR** states the case, of which he's certain

Towing – horses, hay, karts, whatever – is all in a 4x4's day's work

Off-roading is fun. But be prepared to get your socks wet

Even the best working days are better with a tea break

It was once estimated that the rise in popularity of SUVs had effectively undone all of the efficiency improvements made on internal combustion engines. As in, the International Energy Agency said we'd burnt as much fuel in the previous decade as if we'd all stayed driving hatchbacks and made no tech improvements.

In 2023, some 60% of all cars sold in the UK were SUVs, up from 50% in 2021. There are two reasons for this.

The first is that SUV is such a broad term that it now applies to a Ford Puma and a Tesla Model Y just as equally as it applies to a Jeep Wrangler or Land Rover Defender.

This is daft because these cars don't all do the same thing: some SUVs are proper four-wheel-drive off-road-capable vehicles, while others are tall family wagons with big boots and a seat height that makes it easy for ageing hips or child seats to slide on and off them. Really we should call these practical family wagons something other than SUVs.

The second reason is that people think real 4x4s are cool and that off-roading might feel very adventurous, so they want to look like they do it. Hence some SUVs-not-4x4s try to look more like actual off-roaders. But, as we've seen on p40, not all 4x4s, let alone all SUVs, are created equal.

And I'll let you into a secret, just in case you haven't already tried it: off-roading is great. It's as good a day out as a track day, by my reckoning.

Some of my best days at work are off-road days, typically where we hire a disused quarry and devise a series of objective tests for the assembled 4x4s. Off-roading is so much fun that I go off the beaten path in my Land Rover Defender on my own time. I even do it on my motorbike, although, because that weighs a quarter of a tonne and I am a weakling, not terribly ambitiously.

You can do this too, without actually leaving the road. Organisations involved in using and maintaining places you can freely take your 4x4 are quite keen to make a distinction about this.

Using Britain's network of byways, colloquially known as green-laning, is not off-roading. These are highways just like the M1 is a highway, subject to road laws and accessible to all traffic. These are roads.

There will be some in your area, if you live in England and Wales. (In Scotland, they don't exist and access rights are different. In Ireland, they don't either but some very minor rural roads are stony tracks.)

Byways vary from those accessible only by cars with a generous ride height and serious tyres to those you could drive a hatchback down if you didn't care about it much. I like them all.

If you like using byways often, or just care about their future, I'd recommend joining an association like GLASS (The Green Lane Association) or for two-wheelers the TRF (Trail Riders Fellowship), because you'll get more intel than an OS map can give you and it's fair to say the future of access to many roads has been secured by these groups. Your subs help defend the rights of drivers and riders to use roads as we have always been able to.

But if that's not hardy enough and you want to give a 4x4 a proper workout, somewhere you can make a mess, get it stuck, get rescued, get stuck again, stop for a cup of tea and giggle while someone else gets stuck before towing them out, to hone a skill and find out just how far a 4x4 can go (and even after trying and seeing it dozens of times, I'm still surprised at that), hire some time in an off-road centre.

It's affordable (tens rather than hundreds of pounds), slow, friendly, challenging, adventurous, probably not very noisy, and benign. And it's immense fun, although I find it harder to describe exactly why than, say, doing a track day or riding a motorbike. After all, it's not like there's the thrill of speed, and you'll probably get wet socks.

But, then, describe to me the appeal of Diggerland or going on a steam train. I'm not sure it's that easy. If you like machines, and seeing what you can make them do, it's just fun. The thing about a 4x4 is that you can have that fun, then also pull a horse trailer or a boat or caravan somewhere, then go to the shops and then to work in it.

And if there wasn't an intrinsic, if insoluble, appeal to that, fewer drivers would buy cars that made them look like they did it.

"Off-roading is great. It's as good a day out as a track day, I reckon"

Watching, or spotting, is almost as much fun as driving. Almost

Yet again, Prior finds himself at the drier end of the tow rope…

Prior loves 4x4s so much he drove his family to Portugal in a Defender

LIVING WITH A...

Where our long-term test cars have been and what they've done

"While efficiency may be a concern, performance is not"

FIRST REPORT

VOLVO EX40

Could Gothenburg's lowest-profile EV also be its best? We aim to find out

WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT To see if this veteran might actually be the pick of Volvo's growing, tech-first EV range

Much of the talk surrounding Volvo concerns its evolving model range, headlined by the addition of the electric EX30 crossover and EX90 flagship SUV.

But the Swedish firm's first production EV has also been transformed in recent years – to the point that it's been rebranded as the EX40 to differentiate it from its petrol-powered XC40 sibling.

The XC40 Recharge was launched in 2019, which is several generations ago in the fast-developing world of EV technology. That's forced Volvo to make significant upgrades, although they can go only so far. For example, the infotainment in the EX40 remains an older generation than in the EX30 and EX90, in which virtually all of the controls have migrated to a screen. Of course, for many buyers that old-school design could well hold plenty of appeal.

All this has left Autocar's latest long-term test car, for better or for worse, feeling a bit old-tech by comparison. That said, it's still based on parent company Geely's Compact Modular Architecture, which it shares with the much-lauded Polestar 2.

The updated car looks almost identical on the outside to the XC40 Recharge, but some important changes have been made under the skin. While the old model was front-wheel drive, single-motor EX40s instead have a powered rear axle, which should theoretically improve efficiency – and which we've already discovered has really improved the Polestar 2.

Our car is a Single Motor Long Range model, with a 78kWh battery giving it an official range of 340 miles and putting it between the 69kWh Single Motor (295 miles) and 82kWh Twin Motor and Twin Motor Performance models (332 and 326 miles) in the EX40 line-up.

That in theory should be enough to last me an entire week with my driving schedule, but we're in the pits of winter, so I'm not going to be complacent. After all, the EX40 is a heavy beast (2001kg) and its boxy silhouette doesn't exactly lend itself to peak aerodynamic performance. That alone is a recipe for low efficiency, and while I've previously driven EVs through the coldest months without heating, those spending over £50,000 to buy this car understandably won't want to compromise their comfort in return for a respectable range, so the climate control will be glued at

SECOND OPINION

I ran an XC40 Recharge a few years ago. I loved its driving position, comfort and Google-based software, but it needed a slightly longer range – something the move to RWD should provide. I reckon the EX40 is the sweet spot in Volvo's EV line-up, and I look forward to seeing whether Jack agrees. **WR**

31-litre frunk keeps cables out the way

Old-style dash might well work in Warrick's favour

We're hoping switch to RWD has same effect as it had on Polestar 2

a toasty 21deg C until the sun decides to come out again.

Over its first few hundred miles, the EX40 has self-reported use of around 38kWh per 100 miles, which equates to about 2.6mpkWh, or 205 miles of range – a full 135 miles below the advertised figure. At least charging speeds aren't quite so miserly – the quoted 185kW easily beats the Skoda Enyaq (125kW) and BMW iX3 (155kW).

While efficiency may be an early concern, the EX40's performance is not. Even this Single Motor version makes 252bhp and 310lb ft, good for a 0-62mph time of 7.2sec. I suspect that will be plenty fast enough for buyers of this kind of car, who will also appreciate the smooth delivery of that power. At least as importantly, it's so far proving to be a very comfortable cruiser over longer distances too.

The interior is also full of promise. Like the exterior design, it's almost identical to that of the XC40 Recharge so doesn't subscribe to the minimalist, hands-free ethos of the EX30 and EX90 – yet. It almost sounds silly to draw attention to such things at this point, but the steering wheel has buttons for quick access to multimedia functions and the cruise control and our car has a modest 9.0in portrait-oriented infotainment touchscreen, paired with a 12.3in digital gauge display.

Both displays are crisp and clear, and Volvo's Google-powered user interface remains one of the best – although many functions, including Google Assistant, Maps and Play Store (for downloading apps), will demand paid subscriptions after four years. Regardless, it's so well integrated that I haven't even considered using the standard Apple CarPlay. I can just get into the car and forget about my phone for the duration of the journey. Bliss.

Plus trim, the middle one between Core and Ultra, is well equipped. In addition to wireless phone charging, heated seats and a reversing camera, it gets air purification, adaptive cruise control, 19in alloy wheels and keyless entry. And I've already had some highly satisfied passengers, because Plus also offers rear heated seats – quite a rarity.

Early complaints? A few. The EX40's low-speed ride is a bit unsettled and road noise is pronounced. Handling is on the numb side too, but that's hardly surprising given it's positioned as a relaxed family runner, not a Hyundai Ioniq 5 N rival.

So far, then, the EX40 on the whole feels as impressive on the road as it looks on paper. Whether it goes nearly as far on a charge as the brochure says it will may prove the deal-breaker. We will see.

JACK WARRICK

TEST DATA

VOLVO EX40 SINGLE MOTOR LONG RANGE PLUS

Price new £54,305 **Price as tested** £54,305 **Options** None **Expenses** None **Range** 340 miles (WLTP) **Economy** 3.4mpkWh (WLTP)

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
jack.warrick@haymarket.com

BMW i5 TOURING

Stop to charge or push your luck? A real dilemma, especially in winter

MILEAGE 11,576 **WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT** To see if the definitive executive car is now electric, albeit in £100k guise

Autocar's time with this electric 5 Series estate is running out, but I'm still discovering things about it. That's partly because it has a plethora of features, partly because its efficiency varies a lot.

Given that I spent a lot of time last year in a Ford Ranger Raptor, whose petrol V6 returned 21-23mpg consistently regardless of how I treated it, gamifying what efficiency the i5 can return has been fun in a test car. It could be as an ownership proposition too, but there are times when that novelty might wear off.

The other day, I drove from north Oxfordshire to south Hampshire to visit my folks, then did a little local running around, taking it gently because I didn't feel like charging on the road. Still, on the way back I found myself in the sort of quandary that EV drivers with home charging capability will know: to stop or not, with a predicted remaining range falling faster than the actual miles.

LOVE IT

NO JOLTING

If you brake to a stop with the auto hold activated, the i5 takes itself in and out of stationary very smoothly, which isn't a given.

LOATHE IT

ONE EXTRA PROD

A software update was meant to make the car start up in Efficient drive mode if you left it like that the last time, but it still always defaults to Normal with me.

It was late, dark and chilly (if not as cold as when it snowed and the car obliged with 213 miles, or 2.6mpkWh, from 100%) and fast chargers are expensive.

If I'd backed off, I'd probably have reached home, by slipstreaming a coach or truck if things had become critical. Or I could have carried on driving at the speed limit and taken five minutes for a 'splash and dash'.

That would probably have taken a few minutes longer than plodding on. The battery would have needed only a tickle to confidently get me home. I'd have been in the cold while plugging in, but I'd have had time to buy sweets and drive faster after.

A bit nervy, I caved and stopped at the pricey Shell chargers at Tot Hill services, plugged in, checked it was working, strolled into the shop, came back out and found the charge had failed. Blast. I think the cable was too taut. It was the worst of both worlds: taking the time to stop for no reward.

I was too cross to try again, so I drove off and took it easy, drafting a coach for a while and returning home with 5% remaining.

So I managed 3.2mpkWh that day, consuming 81kWh of energy and a bag of Haribo per 261 miles.

MATT PRIOR

TEST DATA

BMW i5 M60 xDRIVE TOURING

Price new £99,090 **Price as tested** £116,060 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Range** 261 miles **Economy** 3.1mpkWh **Last seen** 15.1.25

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You can be sure of a charging fail when running on empty

The classic nativity scene, with an ox, a donkey and… an EV

GENESIS ELECTRIFIED G80

We're not asking for miracles, just a festive trip with no charger disasters

MILEAGE 13,359
WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT Does being the basis for an ICE model compromise the G80 as an EV?

It's a common argument for why someone couldn't live with an electric car: "Yes, I rarely do more than 60 miles at a time, but what if I need to drive 500 miles at a moment's notice, at a time when there are queues at rapid chargers?"

So I thought I would try just that. Over the Christmas holidays, I usually visit my parents in Belgium, which is only about 150 miles from my home in Kent. Not much of a test, then – but an urgent errand meant I went via Warwickshire, turning it into more like 500 miles. And I don't have a home charger, so I started the trip with the battery at about 80%.

In fairness, I did have the right tool for the job, having borrowed Steve Cropley's Genesis Electrified G80, with its 300-mile real-world range, 240kW rapid charging, cushy seats and adaptive suspension.

My first charging stop was still in the UK, so what of those mythical queues? Indeed, Cherwell Valley services on the M40 was absolutely rammed, but there were still two free charging stalls. Because of how busy it was, the G80 was only pulling energy at about 100kW, but that's still not horrendous.

Dover ferry terminal is crying out for a bank of rapid chargers

Onto Dover to catch the ferry and, unlike the Eurotunnel terminal, the Dover ferry port has no rapid chargers, which is a real missed opportunity, because you usually end up waiting around for half an hour anyway.

Because I didn't want to arrive with a flat battery, I needed another top-up on the way from Calais. A few years ago, the UK government made it mandatory for new rapid chargers to offer contactless card payment, but that isn't the case in the EU. As a result, the first charger I arrived at asked me to swipe a charge card but was very unhelpful in telling me which one or if there might be another way to get it going. So I decamped to one a mile away, which thankfully did accept contactless payment.

LOVE IT

NOW THIS IS LUXURY
Wood, leather, proper buttons, a rotary controller and a logical touchscreen interface: Genesis probably makes the best car interiors around right now.

LOATHE IT

INHERENT COMPROMISES
The Electrified G80 is literally that: a petrol G80 with batteries and motors stuffed in wherever there used to be engine bits. As a result, the boot is a joke and you sit 10cm higher – too high.

While rapid chargers in the UK are usually near some sort of amenities, like a motorway service station or a retail park with shops and toilets, a lot of them in Belgium are located in featureless 'carpool' car parks that aren't near anything.

On this evidence, I'd say it's a win for the UK when it comes to rapid chargers. But where Belgium pulls ahead is with its slow 'destination' chargers. One day, we went to a restaurant in Ghent, which is a city that makes Oxford seem like Detroit for car-friendliness. And yet of the few on-street parking spaces there are, quite a large proportion have chargers. Most supermarket car parks and village squares have a couple of them too, and they all appear to use the same smartphone app, Smoov, which does seem to work pretty, ahem, smoovly. They mostly supply 11kW, so by the time you've finished your long lunch, your car's battery is nearly full.

I expected to have to visit a couple more rapid chargers, but with a few incidental slow charges and a top-up on the three-pin cable (using a European adaptor that's rated for the sustained current) on my parents' driveway, I cruised back home with no worries.

The fact that I've managed to spin a few hundred words out of driving to Belgium ultimately means that driving an EV long distances still isn't as carefree as it really should be. On the other hand, if you're able to charge overnight and the only time you have to go hunting for chargers is on the occasional long trip, it's a non-issue.

ILLYA VERPRAET

TEST DATA

GENESIS ELECTRIFIED G80
Price new £69,905 **Price as tested** £84,265 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Range** 289 miles **Economy** 3.5mpkWh **Last seen** 15.1.25

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MG 3

One car, two power sources, three gears, four modes

MILEAGE 5989

WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT To see if our positive first impression of the hybrid supermini lasts in extended use

You might be alarmed if you floor it for an overtake at higher speeds

It seems that no two hybrid powertrains are the same any more. There's a real proliferation of ideas, and the Hybrid+ system that MG has introduced with its new 3 is one of the more interesting ones, having a gearbox of a kind unheard of since the 1990s and no fewer than four operating modes.

One, it can run purely on its 192bhp electric motor, up to around 35mph – and it can do this for longer than many other 'self-charging' hybrids, because its battery is considerably larger than rivals', at 1.8kWh, hence why it's located between the rear wheels rather than under the passenger seat.

Two, it can run as a series hybrid, up to around 59mph – meaning the motor still does all of the driving but the 1.5-litre four-cylinder atmo petrol engine fires up to work as a generator for charging the battery.

Three, under strong acceleration, it can run as a parallel hybrid – meaning the motor and engine are both working to rotate the wheels.

And four, when you're cruising at a steady speed, the engine can simultaneously do the driving and charge up the battery.

I've previously cast doubt over MG's claimed combined torque figure of 313lb ft, because while the 3 is surprisingly fast, it doesn't feel as torquey as a Volkswagen Golf R. To my disappointment, MG hasn't been able to provide a graph showing the car's power and torque curves – although that's perhaps understandable given how complex the powertrain's operation is.

The amazing thing is that you can't really sense which mode the powertrain's computer brain has chosen: it just does its thing while you do yours. Well, unless there's no combustion noise, of course – and it isn't a pleasant-sounding engine, especially when it's firing up from cold. I wonder if it will sound better when not running on the hybrid-specialised Atkinson cycle in the promised pure-petrol manual 3.

I'm not convinced by MG's choice of gearbox, though. Whereas the Toyota Yaris's CVT and the Renault Clio's clutchless multimodal 'box deliver power in a smooth, linear way, the 3 metes it out in distinct waves. The third of these comes at around 70mph, which seems a bizarre point for MG to have chosen, as only Germans could ever (legally) benefit from that.

More pressingly, and something my passengers have really noticed, is the braking. Usually with a new car, your braking is jerky only for that first little while as you retrain your right-leg muscle memory, but with the 3 I still really struggle to decelerate smoothly. I suppose this must be an effect of its blending of friction and regen braking.

All this just adds credence to something a few colleagues have posited: MG's ICE cars, while much better than they were a few years back, are a step behind its EVs in terms of operational sophistication.

KRIS CULMER

LOVE IT

PRESS IN TO IMPRESS

I appreciate the proper steering wheel controls even more after trying a new Ford with VW's haptic icons – infuriating.

LOATHE IT

CENTRAL STORAGE

There's no central bin in which to hide your phone, just a tray beneath your armrest – which I seem to have broken somehow.

TEST DATA

MG 3 HYBRID+ TROPHY

Price new £20,275 **Price as tested** £20,820 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Economy** 50.5mpg **Last seen** 8.1.25

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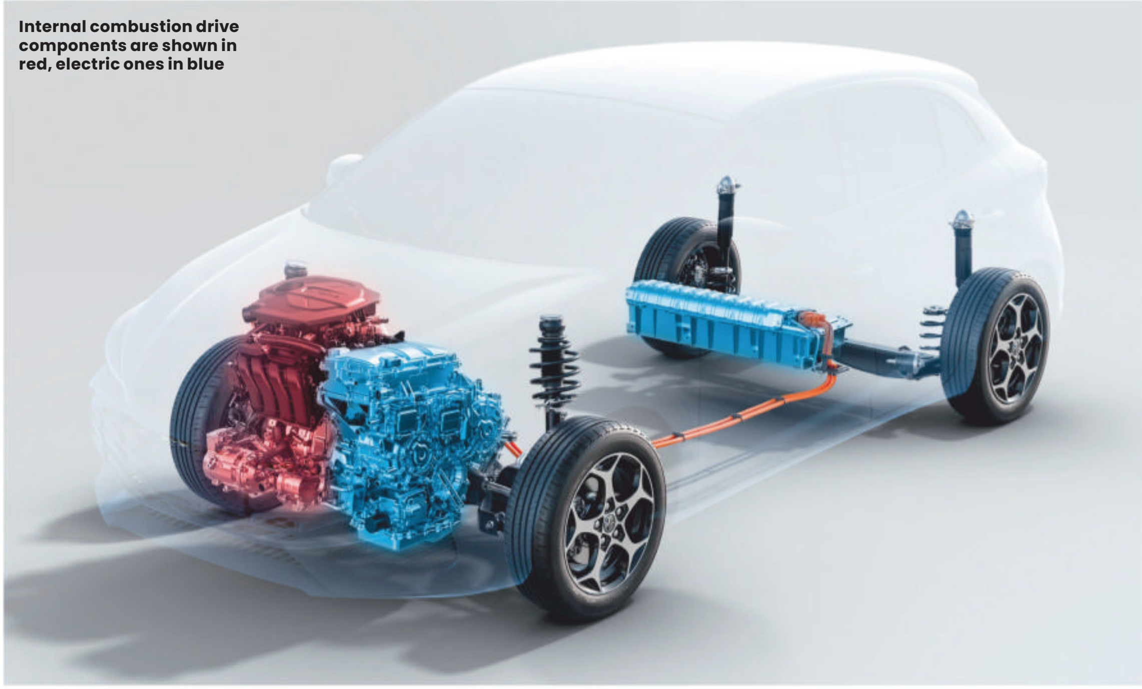
Internal combustion drive components are shown in red, electric ones in blue

SNAPSHOTS

LEXUS RX

Mileage 2254 **Last seen** 22.1.25

A flat tyre is always annoying, and in a £70,000 car it usually means more pain to come. So a persistent slow puncture in the RX gave me that sinking feeling, and sure enough the screw in the tyre was too near the sidewall to repair. A new 235/50 R21 Bridgestone Alenza for the F-Sport was £330 fitted – around twice what the entry-level Premium Pack's 235/60 R19 would set you back. **AC**

VAUXHALL CORSA

Mileage 10,094 **Last seen** 22.1.25

I'm not convinced this Ultimate Corsa looks different enough to lesser ones. Indeed, you can get the same wheels and the black roof with GS trim. It would be nice to have some more regal colour options, perhaps; the Emerald Green Metallic that used to be available across the Vauxhall range would do perfectly. **JH**

SKODA SUPERB

Mileage 1215 **Last seen** 15.1.25

The big challenge early in my time with the Superb Estate has been adjusting to its dimensions. Its width isn't an issue and it's actually quite easy to place on the road as a result, but that can make it easy to forget just how long it is. Until you try parking, that is. This thing will spill over all but the most generous of spaces, creating a dilemma on my street: do I leave the front sticking out into the road or block a good chunk of the pavement with the overhanging boot? **JA**

HOW TO BUY A SUZUKI JIMNY

BUY JIMNY, YOU'VE GOT IT

A car as small as an Up, as rugged as a Defender and cooler than both

Used car prices can fluctuate regularly, but quirky models that have a real cult following tend to hold their value well or even increase in value over time.

This fact is epitomised by the fourth-generation Suzuki Jimny, a character-packed compact off-roader that has already gained modern classic status. We think it's worthy of investment as soon as possible, considering how prices have trickled upwards since its launch in 2018.

Due to limited supply and a short lifespan in the UK (the passenger car version was sold here for only two years and the van was pulled in 2024), the Mk4 Jimny is effectively a collector's item. The classifieds are packed full of cars costing anywhere between £21k and £50k, depending on age and condition.

Why spend over the odds on a Jimny, though, when the Dacia Duster and Fiat Panda both offer 4x4 capability at cheaper prices? Well, while those are solid alternatives, Japan's baby jeep has to be at the top of your wishlist for its combination of a brilliant go-anywhere attitude and sweet, retro-inspired looks.

Thanks to its four-wheel drive system, low-range gearbox and Toyota Land Cruiser-rivalling breakover and departure angles, the Jimny is more than comfortable with being taken off the beaten track. It feels like a mountain goat, its light weight helping it to skip along rough tracks and muddy lanes – although we would exercise caution if any rock crawling is required, due to its low ground clearance. Then again, there are heaps of specialist firms offering upgraded suspension, wheels and underbody protection if you want to turn your Jimny into a Land Rover Defender killer.

It's all chunky plastic mouldings in here, but that's part of the charm

What we said then

28 NOVEMBER 2018

"Beneath the new look and technical overhaul, the essence of Suzuki's miniature 4x4 remains largely untouched. Most importantly, the Jimny is a hugely competent off-roader that's capable of going places where more expensive SUVs would have a tough time following."

A rather less rounded on-road driving experience is the price you pay for such off-road capability. At lower speeds, the ride can be a little choppy, particularly on unkempt surfaces, although once you're up to a brisk speed on cross-country roads, it settles down and irons out lumps and bumps well. There's a lot of body roll through corners and the steering is slow-geared. But still, for the odd urban jaunt, it's a fun little SUV to ride around in.

Powering the Jimny is a 100bhp naturally aspirated 1.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine. There's more than enough performance for barrelling around farmland, and enough pep for trips into and around town. It's less suited to motorways, though, where it feels quite strained at higher revs.

You will also notice an increase in decibels at higher speeds, albeit not as badly as you would in a classic Defender.

Two versions of the Jimny were available in the UK, both with three doors only: the SZ4, which came with steel wheels, and the plusher SZ5, which added alloy wheels, LED headlights, rear privacy glass, climate control and heated seats. It also borrowed a 7.0in infotainment touchscreen from Suzuki's Swift supermini, and while its graphics are a bit lacklustre, smartphone mirroring goes a long way to mitigating that.

Inside the Jimny, there's plenty of chunky physical controls, and while they do feel cheap, they make it easy to adjust functions on the move.

Rear accommodation is only big enough for children (and just two of them, as there's no middle seat), while the side-hinged boot can fit a few carrier bags at best.

Therefore, if you're going to be doing plenty of load-lugging, the Commercial, with its 863-litre cargo area (in place of the seats), is the Jimny to go for.

In any case, there's no better time to snap up a Jimny. There aren't many compact 4x4s out there that will happily do the school run and a spot of green-laning all in the same day.

SAM PHILLIPS

You can go where you'd be scared to drive a large, expensive 4x4

> **"It feels like a mountain goat, its light weight helping it skip along rough tracks and muddy lanes"**

How to get one in your garage

AN OWNER'S VIEW

HANNAH BEST

"I was lucky enough to get hold of one of the first Mk4 Jimnys back in 2019, having instantly fallen for its rugged, boxy look, and I haven't looked back since. I love everything about it. It's small but mighty enough to go anywhere, super-reliable and a proper head-turner. There were a few recalls, but Suzuki sorted things straight away, and I haven't had to pay a fortune on servicing either. Overall, the Jimny is perfect for off-road terrain and city driving. Just don't expect to fit the whole family in!"

BUYER BEWARE...

■ ENGINE

Any oil underneath the car or a burning oil smell could indicate a leak. Make sure to inspect the engine and feel that it runs smoothly on a test drive.

■ GEARBOX

In a manual model, difficulty changing gear or a high biting point could suggest the clutch is on its way out. Gears slipping can also be a sign that the clutch is worn. A replacement isn't cheap, so make sure you take the car on a long test drive to run it up through the gears. Automatic models can suffer from rough gearchanges; replacing the gearbox oil is often the cure.

■ BODY

Most Jimnys will have been used off road at some point, so check the underside for any damage and the bumpers and wheels for scuffs. Rust can build up on the chassis if it isn't regularly cleared or is left untreated, so get underneath the car to have a look at the chassis and suspension. For future peace of mind, it's worth getting the underside wax-oiled to prevent corrosion.

■ SUSPENSION

Noises when travelling over bumps indicate suspension issues. Listen for any unusual sounds and inspect suspension components like the springs and shock absorbers.

■ INFOTAINMENT

Ensure the touchscreen system works properly and there are no phone connection issues.

■ TRANSMISSION

If you wade through fords and get water in the transmission or differential, causing them to fail, it's unlikely that a dealer will repair them under warranty. Get the driveline oils changed if you plan to drive regularly in water.

ALSO WORTH KNOWING

Several firms offer bodykits that can transform your Jimny's look. For instance, Liberty Walk can turn it into a miniature Mercedes G-Wagen for anywhere between £2000 and £6000. Others offer mechanical upgrades. Check, though, that any modifications are from reputable companies and understand that they may well invalidate the car's warranty.

The Jimny has a braked towing capacity of 1300kg and just 100bhp, so it isn't the best car for pulling trailers.

It received a three-star Euro NCAP safety rating, scoring 84% for child occupant safety and 73% for adult occupant safety.

HOW MUCH TO SPEND

£21,000-£24,999

Broad mix of SZ4s and SZ5s and lots of vans (LCVs). Mileages vary. Some Japanese (JDM) imports.

£25,000-£29,999

Plenty of tidy cars and nearly new LCVs. JDM cars are good value here but we would pay more for a UK-supplied example.

£30,000-£34,999

Nearly new, immaculate vans and a mint, low-mileage SZ5.

£35,000 AND ABOVE

New LCVs and some cars fitted with that G-Wagen bodykit.

ONE WE FOUND

SUZUKI JIMNY 1.5 SZ5 ALLGRIP, 2018, 59,000 MILES, £23,950

Although this seven-year-old car has covered reasonable miles, its bodywork and interior are in excellent condition. It also has a full service history, a 12-month warranty and a long MOT. Yet it's one of the cheaper examples in the classifieds at the moment.

My car & I

Back when 'Modern Luxury' meant tweed

Today, if you can't stretch to a new Range Rover, the manufacturer offers consolation models in the form of the Sport, Velar and Evoque. Back in 1987, however, it offered just one: the Land Rover 90 County V8. Some consolation, you might say, when its luxuries extended only to tweed cloth and a leather-covered steering wheel, but for buyers more used to a Landie's vinyl seats and plastic tiller, they were sufficient. In any case, the County's chief appeal lay in its 3.5-litre V8 petrol engine. Here was a 90 with more grunt than its 2.5-litre turbo diesel four stablemate (187lb ft at 2500rpm versus 150lb ft at 1800rpm) and which could stay with the traffic and deliver you to the shops in relative comfort.

Stephen Ludlow loves his, a 1987 example with 86,000 miles on the clock. He bought it at auction in 2019. "Another Land Rover owner was bidding against me," he recalls. "I thought 'he must know what he's doing', so I kept bidding. Fortunately, he eventually dropped out."

Its MOT record showed that it had been tested at the same place 10 times in succession: "The garage that did it was near St Ives. We have a house close by, so buying the car felt like destiny!"

Our cars

Trials and tribulations with my grubby buggy

BY SAM PHILLIPS

The last time this muddied-up trials buggy featured here (30 October 2024), my dad and I had just a handful of events left to do before the end of the season.

Once we had a bit of downtime, we decided to deal with the ride-height issues with which we had been struggling since we swapped our Volkswagen Type 4 engine for a Subaru boxer. We seemed to be clouting the underside of the car more often on hills, and we knew it needed resolving sharpish when, at the very top of a steep climb, we grounded out on a huge mound of earth, which shoved the sump guard up into the exhaust headers. Bugger! (That's not quite the word I used when it happened.)

With a bit of heat, we prised the exhaust back into place, but the ride-height issue was slightly more complicated. I won't bore you with the intricate details, but in short we adjusted the coil springs to raise the floorpan and cured some wheel-alignment issues with new bushings in the rear suspension arms.

It appears to have done the trick, and we had a good run out on our last trial. That said, I did give the front wing a new war wound after I misjudged the power I needed to haul the car up a slippery bank. Personally, I blame the tree.

This started life as a 1972 VW Beetle, believe it or not

Rover V8 is still going strong; rear seats simply swing up out of the way

This was the Landie's luxury spec. Yes, really

> **"It had vague steering and heavy understeer but a supple ride and Range Rover-esque refinement"**

Stephen was intrigued by those 10 MOTs, so on his next visit to the town, he asked the garage to find out if his County's previous owner would share its history.

"A few days later he called me," says Stephen, "and to my surprise it was Frank Dale of the Rolls-Royce specialist. He said the car had belonged to the farm next to him. The farmer had passed away and it ended up at auction, when he bought it. He said he had always had it serviced and that I was welcome to the original wheels and spare back seat in his barn!"

Stephen then approached the Dunsfold Collection, home of more than 130 unique Land Rovers, to find out more about his car's early history: "They told me it had originally belonged to Land Rover before being auctioned, most likely at a British Leyland dealer sale."

Stephen had intended the County as a gift for his son, but even after the steering wheel was swapped for a smaller one, the 6ft 3in prop forward couldn't get his knees underneath it. His father doesn't sound too sorry: "I'm very fond of it. It's in excellent condition underneath and so reliable."

Away from its modest extras, the County V8 kept the dual-transfer box, locking centre differential and long-travel coil springs of standard 90s, so it could climb 45deg gradients and traverse 40deg slopes. As Autocar discovered in 1989, the on-road trade-offs were vague steering, pronounced body roll and heavy understeer, but the ride was supple while refinement neared Range Rover standards.

Dale must have agreed with our comments about the steering: he told Stephen he had removed the power steering because it made the car feel floaty. He also swapped out the carburettors for those from a Rover SD1.

Whatever he did, Stephen is happy. "On my way to St Ives from Surrey, it's perfect on the A303," he says. "People wave, too. Old Land Rovers still bring back memories."

JOHN EVANS

Head to head

FELIX PAGE

1994 DAIHATSU FOURTRAK 2.8 TDL

VS

SAM PHILLIPS

2006 LAND ROVER DISCOVERY 3 2.7

Brief: Find a go-anywhere 4x4 for no more than £5000

FP I adore these Fourtraks. I bet it's utterly horrible to drive, but its Tonka proportions and rock-solid mechanicals appeal to my no-nonsense instincts. A cool and capable winter hack without the Landie premium at just £3750.

SP You don't see many around these days, and yours looks pretty tidy for a 30-year-old. But yes, I've fallen under the Landie spell and picked a Disco 3, because when it's not by the side of the road with its bonnet open, it's one of the most capable 4x4s money can buy.

FP I grew up in the back of a Disco 3, and you've just triggered my air suspension-related PTSD. My Fourtrak has about seven moving parts and can be fixed with either gaffer tape or WD-40.

SP Sure, your Fourtrak is a no-nonsense 4x4, but my £4995 Disco 3 is more refined and has a suite of dedicated off-road modes. Seven seats too.

FP True, but it's hardly a rare breed. I could see this Daihatsu becoming a left-field classic.

SP I don't know about an actual classic, but it certainly wouldn't look out of place at the Festival of the Unexceptional. Maybe we should find a little extra dosh and buy the real king of 4x4s, an old Toyota Land Cruiser...

CAUGHT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

BMW M340D xDRIVE TOURING

2021, 51,500 miles, £31,500

All-rounders don't get much better than this 335bhp, 50mpg estate – and now that diesel 3 Series are no longer sold in the UK, there's no better time to grab one. This one owner-example has a full service history and a long MOT.

VOLKSWAGEN UP 1.0 HIGH UP

2012, 18,000 miles, £5592

For those wanting a first car or an urban runaround, this one-owner Up is ideal. It's barely run-in and is ULEZ-compliant, and has a full service history, a clean MOT and, being in range-topping spec, luxuries including sat-nav and heated seats.

JAGUAR F-TYPE V6 S COUPE

2016, 40,000 miles, £29,750

If you're after a Jag, a used car is your only option – and this British Racing Green roadster is one of the best. Crazy to think you can have this 375bhp V6 for just £1000 more than a new Mazda MX-5. Immaculate inside and out and gets a JLR warranty.

FORD FIESTA 1.0 ECOBOOST ST-LINE EDITION

2020, 32,000 miles, £10,500

You can't go wrong with a Fiesta. This one looks a bit smarter than usual, too, thanks to its sporty styling and 17in wheels. And because it uses the 1.0-litre turbo engine, you should easily get 55mpg-plus out of it.

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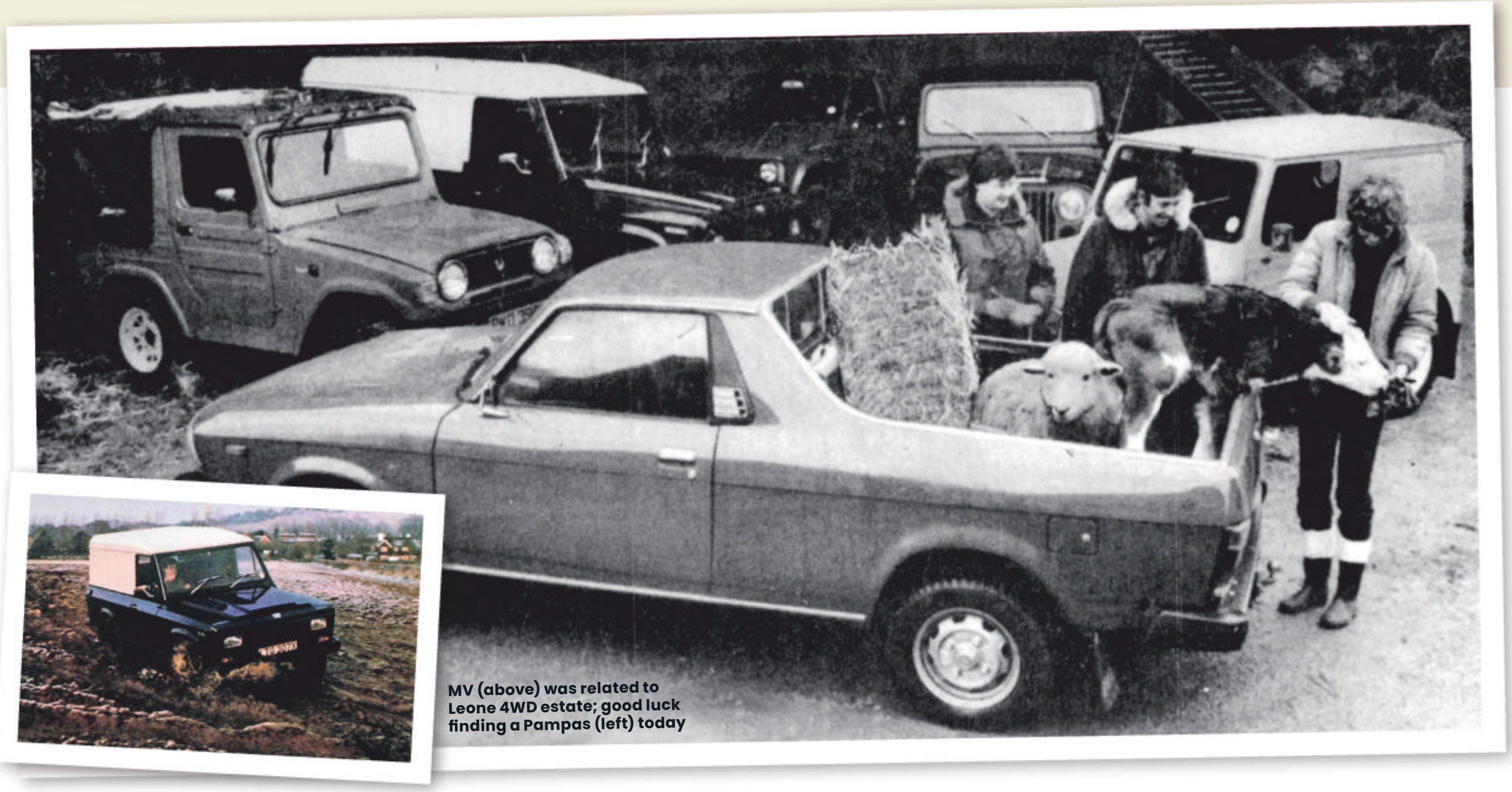

MV (above) was related to Leone 4WD estate; good luck finding a Pampas (left) today

Getting our hands dirty down on the farm

When we write about off-road vehicles, it usually involves larking about in a quarry. But 4x4s aren't just toys for motoring enthusiasts; for many people, they're an absolute necessity for daily life and/or work.

Chief among those people are, of course, farmers. British farms were rapidly mechanised during World War II, and it was the native Land Rover that became the agricultural vehicle of choice as peace returned – and then dominated for decades. In the late 1970s, though, it came under pressure from multifarious 4x4s arriving from abroad. So, in 1982, Autocar gathered the six most significant imports on a farm in rural Kent to see what was what.

Static tests were loading sheep, calves, hay bales and fertiliser bags; dynamic tests were towing a laden livestock trailer, crossing a sodden, snowy ploughed field and negotiating a steep and tortuous Downland route. There was meant to be another – climbing a steep, muddy hill – but none of our 4x4s could actually get to the base, such was the slime at the gate. Our farmer judges were sure that a Landie would also have failed there, mind you.

Predictably, Suzuki's tiny LJ80 (or Jimny), with its mere 225kg payload, could hold the least: just three calves, two sheep or four bales (after a fight with the tailgate).

However, it "could be ideal as an economical, low-cost means of achieving quick access to all points of a large farm or estate, with its very real off-road capabilities. Its 797cc [four-pot] has only 41bhp – quite adequate for nippy runabout work but a little restrictive in harder-working applications."

Modest fuel economy was on the upside, along with the price of just £3799 (£13,290 in modern money).

The Daihatsu F20 (or Taft) wasn't much larger but could hold a fair bit more, with its 385kg payload, although it was "nothing like as refined, being less of a 'fun' vehicle", and "more agricultural inside" – despite costing a much more substantial £5721 (£20,015).

"Nothing to get excited about if you want a vehicle to transport sheep or hay bales but more than adequate for a vehicle that might be called on to rescue a sheep from a snowy hilltop," we concluded.

The Jeep Laredo (CJ-7) was a mixed bag: "It coped well with conditions on the farm, traversing our test field with scornful ease and leaping playfully up ridiculous inclines. It proved one of the better towing vehicles and with automatic transmission was without doubt the easiest to drive. It let us down only when required to start in thick, greasy mud at the foot of a steep ascent. However, it loses out on the farm due to its relatively small load area."

We also had to remove its rear-mounted spare wheel in order to access its towbar.

Still, at £8499 (£29,735), "it deserves consideration for anyone wanting something prettier than a Land Rover but not quite as big and upmarket as a Range Rover [at £14,260]".

For a few quid less, you could buy a Portaro Pampas, a Portuguese version of Romania's ARO 24 (which incidentally had also spawned the original Dacia Duster of 1980).

We expected its steel bodywork to preclude that – indeed, our test car was already rusty – but the farmers didn't care, noting that fertiliser would corrode aluminium anyway.

Its seats and ride were comfier than the Landie's, its Daihatsu diesel four was impressively torquey and we barely even needed to engage 4WD when off-roading it.

All this plus its large load space – seven calves, eight sheep or nine bales – made it the farmers' pick.

We preferred the £4485 (£15,690) Subaru MV (or Brat) pick-up, it being derived from an actual car. No leaf springs for us. "This is the [4x4] that the farmer's wife will love to drive into town," we said, and despite its low ground clearance and fairly normal-looking tyres, "it simply flew through the glutinous mud", thanks to its "light weight and high power" – of 79bhp...

Finally, and by far the best for carrying (no fewer than 22 bales), we had Toyota's Mk3 Hilux, at £5560 (£19,455): "It's rather like the MV but is more of a chore to drive over long distances. It will never get hung up on the deepest of rutted tracks, and the towing was a walkover."

Was any better than the Landie, though? There was no mention of it – which perhaps speaks for itself.

KRIS CULMER

Series Landie had been king of the countryside since 1948

Laredo was best left to transporting cowpokes' Budweisers, we reckoned

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FJZ 669	£175
P24 FOS	£375
P800 FOS	£175
J70 FOW	£275
J3I FRS	£375
HI6 FRY	£375
K24 FRY	£275
FSZ I50I	£75
FSZ I502	£75
F24 FUL	£375
MI00 FUL	£375
K27 GAB	£375
RI2I GAB	£275
T26 GBR	£175
GBZ 566	£275
JI0 GEF	£375
K3I GEF	£275
Y999 GEF	£175
L2I GEL	£375
N27 GEN	£375
S999 GEN	£275
LI5 GGB	£275
K24 GJB	£375
P800 GJB	£175
A24 GJH	£375
F24 GJH	£275
T333 GJH	£175
BI4 GOS	£275
E23 GRM	£375
GSZ 3527	£49
GSZ 3699	£75
X053 GXS	£75
P23 HAD	£275
PI00 HAD	£175
P27 HAW	£275
T90 HAW	£375
K26 HED	£375
P99 HED	£275
K23 HEP	£375
PW5I HER	£75
A23 HEV	£375
K23 HEW	£275
HIG 5556	£275
E2I HLS	£275
S900 HOB	£375
S963 HOB	£175
N27 HOD	£275
YI2I HOT	£275
C2I HOY	£375
HSZ 4024	£75
HSZ 4042	£75
HSZ 7054	£49
N28 HUL	£375
N29 HUN	£275
L99 HUW	£375
IAZ 344	£375
IDZ 773	£175
IKZ 446	£375
IXZ 3253	£75
SI9 JAA	£275
A23 JAA	£175
E24 JAP	£375
J32I JAW	£375
H24 JBC	£375
JBZ 778	£375
KI7 JCC	£375
A24 JCG	£275
A23 JCR	£375
FI3 JDB	£375
AI7 JDD	£375
D25 JDM	£375
T27 JEB	£275
E23 JEE	£275
P28 JEL	£375
T23 JER	£175
M24 JER	£375
L29 JER	£375
K99 JER	£275
TI2I JER	£75
JEZ 7278	£375
JEZ 7672	£275
JGZ I0I4	£175
JGZ 5596	£75
TII JHB	£375
P333 JJB	£375
B76 JJC	£375
A24 JJD	£375
Y28 JJD	£275
W600 JJM	£375
A24 JJP	£375
K29 JKB	£175
Y500 JLB	£375
L80 JLD	£375
K27 JLH	£375
K32I JLH	£275
H22 JLW	£375
R55 JMA	£375
YI2I JMB	£375
LI2I JME	£375
JI2I JMG	£375
KI23 JMH	£375
K23 JMR	£375
P555 JMR	£175
K55 JMT	£375
P2I JOB	£375
K23 JOD	£375
K27 JOS	£375
K32I JOS	£275
E782 JOY	£275
K32I JPB	£375
PI2I JPC	£175
KI2I JPH	£375
WII JPK	£175
K32I JPM	£375
Y900 JPR	£175
JI2I JPS	£375
N555 JPS	£275
H24 JRP	£375
JRZ I66	£375
JRZ 2329	£175
H22 JSC	£375
A23 JSD	£375
P222 JSM	£275
K26 JSS	£275
F24 JSW	£375
K28 JSW	£275
N29 JTB	£275
N2I JUN	£375
P23 JUS	£175
R29 JUS	£275
P28 KAB	£375
JI23 KAB	£375
E24 KAH	£275
P2I KAN	£275
A24 KAV	£275
M28 KAV	£375
P28 KEE	£375
N32I KER	£375
A24 KES	£375
N24 KEY	£375
KIG I5I	£375
JI23 KJB	£375
EI7 KJP	£275
E2I KLS	£375
J24 KMC	£375
KRZ 7567	£75
KRZ 7568	£49
L26 KYL	£275
H2I KYS	£375
B25 LAC	£375
D25 LAC	£375
P23 LAD	£375
B22 LAG	£375
A24 LAG	£275
P27 LAH	£375
E2I LAK	£375
B23 LAK	£175
A22 LAR	£375
B23 LAR	£275
E22 LAT	£375
B2I LAX	£275
F22 LAX	£275
T28 LEC	£375
B20 LEG	£275
N99 LEG	£175
L700 LEG	£375
A23 LEM	£375
P24 LER	£375
N25 LER	£275
R2I LET	£375
K23 LET	£375
NI5 LEV	£375
LGZ 3565	£175
LGZ 6323	£75
LIG 972I	£175
JI23 LJB	£375
KI23 LJS	£375
J32I LJW	£375
H2I LLB	£275
H2I LLD	£275
K27 LLE	£275
H2I LLG	£175
J2I LLG	£275
H2I LLM	£375
H2I LLP	£175
D2I LLR	£275
A2I LLX	£375
N29 LOC	£375
F24 LOG	£375
P44 LON	£375
K28 LOO	£375
KI23 LOR	£275
K24 LOV	£175
N24 LOV	£375
F2I LSY	£375
S800 LUC	£375
LUI 272	£375
M26 LUM	£375
K2I LUV	£175
F22 LYD	£375
J32I LYD	£375
F2I LYY	£275
A23 LYY	£375
G22 MAA	£375
K24 MAF	£375
J3I MAM	£375
RI23 MAW	£275
P200 MCA	£275
A24 MCJ	£175
N24 MCP	£375
C26 MCS	£375
K32I MCS	£275
K23 MCT	£375
G4I MCT	£275
JI23 MCT	£375
P24 MCW	£375
K29 MCW	£375
KI23 MCW	£275
C24 MDB	£375
K50 MDB	£275
L555 MDS	£375
K26 MEC	£375
P26 MED	£275
N70 MED	£175
H2I MEE	£375
K27 MEE	£375
EL04 MER	£275
K32I MET	£275
R32I MET	£175
G23 MFC	£375
A24 MGB	£275
B24 MGB	£375
EI8 MGM	£275
MGZ 4895	£75
MGZ 4896	£75
PI3 MHW	£75
KI2I MJG	£375
MJI 799	£375
KI2I MJK	£275
K27 MJL	£375
NI2I MJP	£275
JI2I MJR	£375
L700 MJR	£275
JI23 MJT	£375
G23 MLC	£375
A23 MLD	£375
P99 MLH	£375
KI2I MLS	£175
A24 MLW	£275
E23 MMB	£375
L28 MMB	£275
E22 MMC	£375
JI5 MOE	£375
P77 MOE	£275
KI2I MOE	£175
KI2I MOG	£375
H9 MOW	£375
A24 MOW	£175
S70 MOW	£275
P88 MOW	£275
D24 MPW	£275
A24 MPY	£275
C26 MRH	£375
RIII MRH	£375
JI2I MRH	£375
KI2I MRK	£375
A23 MRL	£375
K32I MRP	£275
LI23 MRT	£375
E24 MRY	£375
MRZ 2639	£175
K26 MSH	£275
E24 MSS	£375
KI2I MSS	£175
K27 MSW	£275
H22 MTB	£375
Y25 MTB	£275
B22 MTH	£375
Y24 MTH	£275
MUI 88I	£375
C22 MUS	£375
E22 MUS	£275
MXZ 33I0	£175
A2I MYM	£275
YI4 NAG	£375
P24 NAP	£375
R29 NAP	£175
T28 NAR	£375
N29 NAR	£275
A23 NDW	£375
P23 NED	£275
R28 NED	£375
L28 NGE	£275
YI2I NGE	£175
A23 NGL	£375
A23 NGY	£275
NGZ I0I2	£75
NGZ I022	£75
K32I NJH	£275
G23 NJP	£375
NJZ 227	£175
GU54 NNE	£175
P3I NNN	£275
A23 NNS	£275
A22 NNT	£175
A23 NNY	£275
C24 NOE	£375
W44 NOV	£175
NRZ 474	£275
A2I NSE	£375
A24 NSL	£375
A22 NTY	£275
A24 NUT	£275
L27 NUT	£375
A2I NYS	£275
C23 OAT	£375
B22 OBB	£375
H2I OBY	£275
OBZ 552	£275
A2I OCH	£275
P23 OCT	£275
H22 ODG	£375
J23 OEE	£275
OGZ 5449	£175
OJZ 878	£275
P28 OLD	£375
T3I OLD	£275
N3I ONG	£375
C2I OPP	£375
H23 ORN	£375
H22 OSK	£175
C2I OTS	£275
H2I OTS	£275
B2I OVE	£375
N2I OVE	£375
H23 OVE	£375
H23 OWL	£375
K28 OWL	£275
OXZ I03I	£175
E2I OYD	£375
H2I OYD	£375
K3I OYD	£275
K32I PAC	£275
S200 PAD	£375
K3I PAP	£275
KI2I PAS	£275
A633 PAT	£375
L29 PAW	£375
C8 PBW	£375
A4 PCD	£375
K23 PEG	£375
RI2I PEG	£75
MI2I PER	£275
JI23 PER	£375
S300 PES	£275
K23 PET	£375
N7 PEX	£275
PGZ I264	£75
PGZ I265	£75
L32I PJB	£375
L23 PJC	£375
H24 PJG	£375
R222 PJM	£375
N2I PJS	£375
K26 PJW	£375
KI2I PJW	£275
AI5 PLC	£275
PLZ 262	£275
VI2I PMC	£275
D20 PMS	£175
JG05 POT	£175
N25 POT	£275
K3I PPP	£175
K2I PPS	£275
A24 PRK	£375
L27 PRO	£375
PRZ I0I2	£175
PRZ 2635	£75
E23 PUD	£375
K27 PUD	£275
K23 PUG	£375
N27 PUG	£275
J50 PUL	£375
PXI 966	£275
PXZ I834	£75
PXZ I835	£75
A23 RAL	£275
N27 RAL	£175
RAZ I258	£375
RAZ I370	£275
PIII RDA	£75
G24 RDD	£275
A24 RDH	£275
PI2I REB	£275
M666 REL	£275
G007 RES	£75
K3I RES	£175
YIII REX	£275
P700 REX	£175
C7 RFH	£275
RFZ 22I	£175
RGZ I0I8	£175
RGZ 2807	£75
RJZ I9I	£275
L28 RKS	£275
RKZ 878	£275
E24 RLL	£275
H23 RMB	£275
KI2I RMS	£275
A23 RMW	£275
K23 ROE	£275
L24 ROE	£275
AI5 ROJ	£275
A23 ROL	£175
L24 ROL	£275
L600 ROW	£275
RRZ I089	£75
RRZ I206	£175
RRZ I207	£175
K26 RSB	£275
G24 RUB	£175
K23 RYE	£275
K27 SAC	£275
A23 SAK	£275
RI2I SAW	£275
SBZ 337	£275
HI9 SCR	£275
P3I SEC	£275
K2I SED	£275
K25 SEP	£175
P32I SER	£175
PI2I SES	£275
T944 SET	£75
SEZ 774	£275
SGZ I22	£275
SGZ 2357	£75
SGZ 2358	£175
SGZ 2359	£175
P27 SHO	£275
P29 SHP	£275
KI23 SHY	£275
SHZ 359I	£375
SIG I032	£275
K26 SKA	£275
LI2I SLS	£275
H23 SMD	£275
Y300 SMR	£175
E22 SMY	£275
T29 SOO	£275
RI2I SOO	£175
K26 SOP	£275
H23 SPR	£275
L32I SPY	£275
SRZ I265	£75
SRZ I36I	£175
K3I SSO	£275
N60 SUL	£175
P888 SUL	£275
K600 SUS	£175
P800 SUS	£275
SXZ 2052	£75
SXZ 2053	£75
KI2I TAB	£175
P2I TAC	£275
P54 TAD	£175
N25 TAF	£275
L27 TAJ	£275
H24 TAL	£275
L400 TAP	£275
PI2I TAS	£275
K2I TAT	£275
TAZ I785	£375
N27 TEE	£275
TGZ I58I	£175
K28 THE	£275
THZ I829	£75
TIG I698	£275
TJZ 252	£375
K27 TMB	£175
H2I TNY	£275
N653 TOD	£175
A24 TOP	£275
AS05 TOR	£275
PI2I TOR	£275
LIII TPH	£75
PIII TRH	£75
TRZ I348	£175
TRZ I349	£175
TRZ I352	£75
K28 TTH	£275
P28 TTT	£275
PI2I TTT	£175
D23 UFO	£275
UIG I2I6	£75
URZ 2234	£75
URZ 3274	£49
T29 USA	£175
E24 VEE	£275
K32I VEN	£275
VIG I22	£275
VIG I027	£75
K3I VOS	£175
VRZ 3282	£75
VRZ 3283	£75
VRZ 3284	£75
N27 WAG	£275
P32I WAG	£175
KI2I WAY	£175
A23 WBA	£275
P24 WED	£275
RI2I WED	£75
S900 WED	£175
LOI0 WES	£275
NI2I WES	£275
Y400 WES	£175
WEZ 7800	£275
WHZ I0I9	£275
WIG II6	£375
WIG 2I58	£175
WIG 2I59	£175
K23 WLS	£275
XIG 3678	£75
XIG 3867	£75
YHZ I490	£49
YHZ I49I	£75
YUI I425	£75
YUI I479	£49

ROAD TEST RESULTS

Autocar's history of the independent, objective and empirical road testing of new cars is the longest in the world. But like everything that endures, our road testing process has always moved with the times.

Until recently, it was thought that our first instrumented road test report was published on an Austin Seven in April 1928, but fresh research has lately revealed that the tradition is older still.

For more than a century, these road tests have been verifying, describing and illustrating the performance and characteristics in close detail, one new car at a time. Driving impressions have always been a key component part of them, around which other elements have changed. In early years, these test elements included benchmarking of braking effort, gradient climbing capability and rolling resistance. Later they expanded to take in acceleration, top speed and stopping distance, as well as cruising noise level. Cabin dimensions and measured weight became included too.

Today we use the Horiba MIRA proving ground in the Midlands to take similar performance benchmarks of new cars – and we've recently expanded the test's remit to take in braking stamina over repeated stops and, in the case of electrified cars, DC rapid-charging performance and measured acceleration at both high and low indicated state of charge. All are key indicators of the integrity of vehicle engineering in this emerging era.

Some of our road tests also include lap-time performance benchmarks where appropriate, but all are designed first and foremost to assess the fitness for intended purpose of any given new car - and to do it better and more thoroughly than any other independent test there is.

You can dig deeper into their findings and learn more about more than a century of road tests with a subscription to the ever-expanding digital Autocar Archive (visit themagazineshop.com/aca23ed/aca).

Matt Saunders, road test editor

ABARTH

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
500 Esseesse	★★★★☆	25.3.09	Charm on a stick. Raucous and fun.	7.6	6.5	1135	35.8	-
500e Turismo	★★★⯪☆	9.8.23	A stylish and entertaining pint-size EV but pricey and needs refining.	6.9	6.4	1395	-	142
595 Competizione	★★★⯪☆	26.2.14	Great when it's good but tiring when it's bad.	7.5	6.4	1135	39.2	-

ALFA ROMEO

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Giulia Quadrifoglio	★★★★⯪	29.3.17	Everything you would want a fast Alfa Romeo saloon to be. A triumph.	4.5	3.2	1700	35.7	-
Stelvio 2.2D 210 Milano Edizione	★★★⯪☆	3.1.18	Spry-handling SUV is likeable, if short of the class's usual refinements.	6.8	7.0	1815	49.7	-
Stelvio Quadrifoglio	★★★⯪☆	9.1.19	A real driver's car, but it stretches SUV-related bounds of acceptability.	4.0	3.3	1931	31.9	-
Stelvio 2.0T 280 Veloce AWD	★★★★☆	28.6.23	Short on premium refinement but meets its discreetly sporty brief well.	5.7	5.3	1784	32.2	-

ALPINE

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A110 Première Edition	★★★★★	16.5.18	Hilarious fun delivered in effusive and accessible fashion.	4.7	3.8	1125	45.6	-
A110 Légende GT	★★★★⯪	9.3.22	The best fast A110 we've seen but not quite the definitive version.	4.8	3.9	1140	40.2	-
A110 R	★★★⯪☆	15.11.23	Hardcore A110 has its lures but probably not enough of them for its price.	4.2	3.5	1094	39.7	-

ARIEL

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Atom 4	★★★★★	9.10.19	Track-slayer is unrivalled for built-in quality and dynamic character.	3.2	2.4	680	39.2	-

ASTON MARTIN

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Vantage	★★★★⯪	18.9.24	Baby Aston grows up to spectacular effect. A machine of stunning breadth and likeability.	3.5	2.6	1745	28.5	-
DBS Superleggera	★★★★★	21.11.18	Effortlessly fast and intoxicating to drive, the big Aston is better than ever.	3.7	2.7	1910	25.6	-
DBX	★★★★⯪	28.10.20	Does everyday driver appeal better than any other super-SUV.	4.6	3.8	2328	24.8	-
DBX 707	★★★★☆	30.11.22	A better DBX to drive, but still leaves room for improvement.	3.3	2.8	2278	26.2	-

AUDI

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A1 Sportback 35 TFSI S Line Style Edition	★★★⯪☆	2.10.19	Luxury supermini lacks the polish to justify its high price.	7.9	8.4	1209	57.0	-
S3 Sportback	★★★⯪☆	18.11.20	Audi delivers an effective if somewhat unlovable hot hatch.	4.8	4.2	1552	39.0	-
RS4 Avant	★★★★☆	14.2.18	A hot estate that oozes class but is curiously short on charisma.	4.0	3.5	1790	36.7	-
S4 TDI	★★★★☆	18.9.19	Diesel power sparks an appealingly different identity for this fast Audi.	4.6	4.1	1871	54.3	-
S5 Launch Edition	★★★★☆	15.1.25	Rounded sports saloon with a characterful V6 and new-found dose of driver appeal.	4.1	3.8	2027	33.7	-
A5 Sportback 2.0 TFSI 252PS Quattro S Line S Tronic	★★★⯪☆	8.3.17	Sleek mid-sized executive fastback is still short of a selling point beyond its style.	5.7	5.3	1535	41.1	-
A6 Avant 40 TDI S Line S Tronic	★★★★☆	14.11.18	High-tech throwback is a timely reminder of what Audi does best.	8.4	7.5	1710	50.1	-
RS6 Avant Carbon Black	★★★★☆	11.3.20	Bigger on luxury and usability than rawness or involvement.	3.3	2.8	2217	32.8	-
A6 50 TFSIe Quattro S Line	★★★★☆	5.1.22	Hybrid tech boosts saloon's refinement, charm and running credentials.	5.7	5.2	2077	45.4	34
A7 Sportback 50 TDI Quattro Sport	★★★⯪☆	11.7.18	Easy on the eye and to live with but let down by stolid dynamics.	5.8	5.3	1880	53.1	-
A8 L 60 TFSIe Quattro Sport	★★★⯪☆	17.6.20	Technically impressive but not as cosseting as a limo ought to be.	-	-	2330	-	-
E-tron 55 Quattro	★★★★⯪	26.6.19	A rounded, uber-luxurious addition to the premium EV niche.	5.4	4.2	2569	-	218
E-tron S Quattro	★★★⯪☆	2.6.21	A slick, tech-laden luxury operator but no dynamic landmark for EVs.	4.2	3.6	2643	-	-
Q2 1.4 TFSI Sport	★★★⯪☆	9.11.16	Fit for purpose but a less compelling option than it might have been.	8.1	8.2	1316	-	-
SQ2 Quattro S Tronic	★★★★☆	20.3.19	More fun than you might expect from a crossover or an Audi S model.	4.5	4.1	1530	34.5	-
Q4 E-tron 40 Sport	★★★⯪☆	7.7.21	Practical, pleasant and efficient but not a superior premium product.	8.1	7.8	2112	-	-
Q5 2.0 TDI 190PS Quattro S Line S Tronic	★★★★☆	15.3.17	Like the previous Q5 but with additional class, dynamism and polish.	8.3	8.5	1770	42.5	-
SQ5 TSI Quattro	★★★⯪☆	21.6.17	Mid-sized performance SUV bites off more than it can chew.	5.5	5.0	1870	32.6	-
SQ5 Sportback TDI Quattro	★★★⯪☆	3.8.22	Not the sharpest fast SUV, but the real-world appeal is clear to see.	5.1	4.6	2023	49.0	-
Q6 E-tron Quattro Edition 1	★★★⯪☆	2.10.24	EV is hard to love, easier to recommend, with good dynamics and strong EV credentials.	5.3	4.3	–	2.8	247
Q7 3.0 TDI Quattro S Line	★★★★☆	12.8.15	Chiselled, plush, suave and spacious. Only so-so to drive, though.	6.2	6.2	2245	-	-
SQ7 4.0 TDI Quattro	★★★★⯪	26.10.16	A class-topping blend of superlative comfort and usable performance.	5.1	4.5	2330	37.9	-
Q8 50 TDI S Line	★★★★☆	26.9.18	Striking and effective SUV-coupé leaves us wanting more.	6.9	6.7	2285	40.1	-
R8 V10 Plus	★★★★☆	30.12.15	Supercar grips and goes even harder but wants for its predecessor's delicacy.	3.1	2.6	1730	-	-

BENTLEY

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Bentayga W12	★★★★⯪	18.5.16	Versatile, genteel, luxurious SUV with a silken sporting edge.	4.9	4.4	2440	-	-
Bentayga EWB Mulliner Blackline	★★★★☆	24.4.24	Stretched SUV lacks the Mulsanne limo's charm but is a better luxury car by far.	4.4	3.8	2600	25.6	-
Continental GT W12 First Edition	★★★★⯪	2.5.18	Superb luxury coupé has added dynamism but not enough to top the class.	3.6	2.9	2295	26.4	-
Continental GT Speed	★★★★☆	22.12.21	Remains a wonderful grand tourer but can fall short as an entertainer.	3.4	2.7	2279	22.0	-
Continental GTC V8 S	★★★★⯪	19.4.23	Sporty V8 execution adds vivacity to a car that makes you feel good.	3.6	3.2	2295	29.1	-
Flying Spur W12	★★★★⯪	15.7.20	Trounces rivals for driver appeal but not in every way that matters.	3.9	3.2	2500	32.5	-
Flying Spur Hybrid Mulliner	★★★★⯪	17.8.22	Mightily convincing PHEV limo more than earns its Bentley wings.	4.4	3.9	2596	30.1	28

BMW

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
120 M Sport	★★★⯪☆	31.12.24	Credible and complete junior BMW still lacks distinguishing driver appeal.	7.3	6.8	1489	45.8	-
218i M Sport Gran Coupé	★★★☆☆	8.4.20	Junior Gran Coupé hits some high notes but fails to inspire.	8.8	8.4	1375	58.2	-
220i M Sport Coupé	★★★★☆	1.6.22	A good coupé rather than a great sports car.	7.3	7.3	1546	46.8	-
M2 Coupé Manual	★★★★⯪	12.7.23	Junior M car takes huge objective leaps but smaller subjective ones.	4.5	3.8	1687	32.1	-
320d M Sport Auto	★★★★★	15.5.19	BMW's one-time default-choice executive saloon hits even greater heights.	6.9	6.8	1639	63.3	-
330d xDrive M Sport Plus Edition Touring	★★★★⯪	15.1.20	An estate that's powerful, classy and great to drive – but with a price to match.	5.5	5.2	1922	52.6	-
330e M Sport	★★★★⯪	1.7.20	Slicker and sweeter-handling than the average PHEV. A true 3 Series.	-	-	1740	-	-
M440i xDrive	★★★★☆	6.1.21	A rounded, engaging and potent coupé let down only by its looks.	4.1	3.7	1775	44.0	-
M4 Competition	★★★★⯪	21.4.21	A very modern M car and a brilliantly versatile and enjoyable one.	3.9	2.9	1800	32.7	-
i4 M50	★★★★☆	19.1.22	Fast, refined and with lots of traditional appeal to convert sceptics.	4.1	3.2	2248	-	186
M4 CSL	★★★★☆	16.11.22	A next-level M car, with the more complex temperament to match.	3.6	2.7	1625	31.1	-
M5	★★★⯪☆	29.1.25	A technical leap, but one born more out of necessity than inspiration.	3.5	2.8	2373	27.3	35
i5 eDrive40 M Sport Pro	★★★⯪☆	29.11.23	Has dynamic appeal but less convincing than BMW's other EV saloons.	5.4	4.4	2213	-	235
550e xDrive M Sport Pro	★★★★☆	3.4.24	Undeniably capable and a fine plug-in hybrid sports saloon.	4.4	3.5	2232	40.1	47
i7 xDrive60 M Sport	★★★★⯪	15.2.23	It has taken huge strides as a luxury car – and still drives like a BMW.	4.5	3.4	2758	-	264
840d xDrive	★★★★☆	16.1.19	A likeable big GT, albeit not the most luxurious or rewarding on sale.	5.0	4.6	1901	49.2	-
M8 Competition Convertible	★★★⯪☆	5.2.20	Has attitude to spare but isn't the complete super-GT.	3.3	2.7	2020	31.6	-
M8 Competition	★★★⯪☆	3.6.20	Highly capable but doesn't truly satisfy as either a sports car or a GT.	-	-	1960	-	-
X1 xDrive23i M Sport	★★★⯪☆	25.1.23	A decent family crossover but a poor BMW.	6.4	6.0	1800	45.6	-
X4 M Competition	★★★☆☆	13.11.19	Fast and precise, if short on the big-time charisma that you would expect.	4.0	3.3	2028	29.0	-
X5 xDrive30d M Sport	★★★★☆	2.1.19	Better to drive than the SUV norm but not better across the board.	6.6	6.6	2279	43.1	-
X6 M Competition	★★★☆☆	20.3.24	Unyielding performance focus makes for a fast but compromised SUV.	3.5	3.1	2442	29.3	-
X7 M50i M Performance xDrive	★★★★☆	9.9.20	Stunningly large and enviably refined but too excessive for many.	4.8	3.9	2583	30.5	-
X7 M60i xDrive	★★★★☆	29.3.23	Uncompromising-looking X7 is seriously fast but laudably refined.	4.2	3.7	2600	28.9	-
iX xDrive50 M Sport	★★★★⯪	2.3.22	Takes the luxury EV to elevated heights, but its design is easy to criticise.	4.4	3.4	2593	-	252
Z4 M40i with Handschalter Pack	★★★★☆	21.8.24	Manual gearbox gives six-year-old roadster new depth.	5.7	5.9	1561	36.9	-

BMW ALPINA

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
B3 GT Touring	★★★★⯪	15.1.25	Last-dance B3 has mighty breadth and will go down as one of the all-time greats.	3.3	2.7	1910	29.4	-
B8 Gran Coupé	★★★★☆	22.9.21	Superbly rounded but lacking some dynamism implied by its looks.	3.5	2.8	2100	-	-

BYD

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Atto 3 Design	★★★☆☆	31.5.23	Lack of attention to detail detracts from the impressive battery tech.	7.0	6.2	1787	-	201
Seal Design	★★★⯪☆	17.1.24	Frustrating software lets down the mostly impressive hardware.	5.8	4.7	2116	-	279

CATERHAM

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Seven 160	★★★★☆	20.11.13	Fun entry-level version of B-road toy smacks just a little of compromise.	8.4	8.7	510	44.8	-
Seven 620S	★★★★⯪	9.3.16	Supplies fun intravenously with a mix of freneticism and road-going usability.	3.8	4.2	650	29.5	-
Seven 420 Cup	★★★★⯪	31.8.22	Track-day variant serves up sensational driving thrills – for a price.	4.2	3.4	560	35.3	-

CHEVROLET

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Corvette 3LT	★★★★☆	22.6.22	Big step up for charismatic, usable and temptingly priced American icon.	3.9	3.2	1679	32.9	-
Corvette Z06 3LZ	★★★★☆	16.8.23	Incredible engine and chassis makeover, but the price has to be right.	3.1	2.4	1670	26.1	-

CITROEN

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Ami Colour	★★⯪☆☆	11.1.23	Cleverly conceived but hard to recommend, given its limited capabilities.	-	-	471	-	39
C3 Puretech 110 Flair	★★★⯪☆	28.12.16	Dynamically challenged, but a cheery design makes this supermini interesting.	9.6	9.4	1050	62.3	-
C3 Aircross Puretech 110 Flair	★★★⯪☆	7.3.18	Practical small crossover isn't outstanding to drive but is likeable nonetheless.	11.5	10.7	1159	39.5	-
C4 Puretech 130 Shine Plus Auto	★★★☆☆	26.5.21	Has rational and irrational appeal but lacks a fine-tuned execution.	9.5	9.2	1320	56.4	-
ë-C4 X Shine	★★★⯪☆	3.5.23	EV motoring done differently, with value, but its successes are qualified.	9.7	8.8	1623	-	162
C5 Aircross BlueHDi 180 Flair Plus	★★★⯪☆	13.2.19	Attractive and interesting, although its style is better than its substance.	9.0	8.5	1540	47.8	-
C5 X Puretech 180 Shine Plus	★★★★☆	28.9.22	Good value and comfy, this is the kind of car that Citroën should be making.	7.8	7.1	1502	47.8	-

CUPRA

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Born 204PS 58kWh V3	★★★⯪☆	6.7.22	As good as the family hatchback EV class gets in places but not as good as it could be.	6.7	6.2	1794	-	220
Born VZ First Edition	★★★★☆	9.10.24	An already fine electric car's driver appeal is lifted but not transformed.	5.4	4.2	1996	3.5	269
Leon Estate 310PS VZ3	★★★★☆	8.9.21	Fiercely quick and dependable but pulls the heartstrings only lightly.	4.9	4.3	1707	40.1	-
Leon 2.0 TSI 245PS VZ2	★★★★☆	27.7.22	Brilliantly rounded hot hatch shines in its simplest spec.	5.9	4.7	1468	43.4	-
Ateca 2.0 TSI 4Drive DSG	★★★⯪☆	23.1.19	Hot crossover is objectively impressive but lacks true driver reward.	4.9	4.4	1615	36.7	-
Formentor 2.0 TSI 4Drive VZ2 DSG	★★★★⯪	3.2.21	Versatile, interesting, rewarding. One of the best fast crossovers yet.	5.1	4.3	1583	36.4	-

DACIA

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Sandero Stepway TCe 90 Prestige	★★★★☆	28.4.21	Cut-price crossover is compromised in surprisingly few areas.	11.9	11.9	1096	54.1	-
Duster SCe 115 4x2 Comfort	★★★★☆	22.8.18	Comfortable, simple SUV keeps its budget family motoring star quality.	13.1	12.6	1286	42.2	-
Duster Hybrid 140 Journey	★★★★⯪	27.11.24	Notably improved yet barely any pricier.	9.7	8.7	1413	40.2	-
Jogger TCe 110 Comfort	★★★★⯪	20.4.22	Superb versatility, outstanding value and so likeable with it.	11.0	11.0	1267	48.5	-

DS

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
3 Crossback Puretech 155 Prestige	★★★☆☆	10.7.19	No design smash hit. Short on perceived quality and dynamic polish.	8.8	8.3	1205	48.6	-
4 E-Tense 225 Performance Line+	★★★⯪☆	29.6.22	High price and a list of niggles keep this family hatchback away from the top.	7.4	6.0	1706	44.7	26
7 Crossback Puretech 225 Prestige	★★★⯪☆	19.9.18	DS's first SUV is a competent but slightly bland addition to the class.	8.6	7.0	1616	44.6	-
7 E-Tense 4x4 360 La Première	★★★⯪☆	26.4.23	More focused and makes subtle gains, but its powertrain and ride frustrate.	5.7	4.6	1956	36.6	29
9 E-Tense 225 Performance Line Plus	★★★⯪☆	2.2.22	Posh saloon is alternative and devoted to its luxury remit but no show-stopper.	8.6	7.1	1886	44.7	20

FERRARI

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
296 GTB	★★★★★	21.12.22	Stellar modern-era Ferrari supercar has an unrivalled breadth of talent.	2.7	1.9	1648	37.8	15
SF90 Stradale	★★★★☆	3.11.21	Sets the performance benchmark but isn't a track-handling great.	2.5	1.8	1698	24.4	16

FIAT

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Panda 1.2 Easy	★★★★⯪	25.4.12	Was everything a city car ought to be but is now way past its prime.	14.6	15.6	1020	49.1	-
Panda 4x4 Twinair	★★★★☆	17.4.13	A lovable four-wheel-drive miniature that trades space for style and charm.	14.6	15.8	1195	44.2	-
500 1.4 Lounge	★★★★☆	19.9.07	Enjoyable city car with the substance to back up its style.	10.3	10.4	1065	42.8	-
500C 1.2 Pop	★★★★☆	5.8.09	Landaulet hits the spot every bit as well as the regular hatchback and is often better.	13.2	14.4	1035	48.3	-

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

500 Twinair Lounge ★★★⯪☆ 24.11.10

Characterful and stylish, but its real-world economy lets it down.

11.7 13.0 1070 42.1 -

500e 42kWh Icon ★★★★☆ 26.1.22

More than just an electric city car and a welcome return to form.

8.1 7.7 1365 - 142

600e La Prima ★★★⯪☆ 27.3.24

Electric crossover is decent value and easy to drive but otherwise a bit easy to overlook.

8.8 7.7 1587 - 173

FORD

Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost 125PS Titanium ★★★★⯪ 9.8.17

A dynamically brilliant supermini but no longer the best one.

6.6 7.8 1218 48.2 -

Fiesta ST ★★★★⯪ 15.8.18

Great to drive and supreme value but not better than before in all aspects.

6.6 7.8 1218 48.2 -

Focus 1.5 Ecoboost 182PS ST-Line X ★★★★⯪ 20.2.19

Better to drive and look at than before and impressively good value.

8.9 7.8 1417 43.8 -

Focus ST ★★★★☆ 11.9.19

Big on character and performance but not quite truly immersive.

6.1 4.9 1433 40.7 -

Puma 1.0T 125PS MHEV Titanium ★★★★⯪ 25.3.20

The driver's car the compact crossover class has been crying out for and more besides.

10.0 9.6 1260 50.0 -

Puma ST ★★★★☆ 24.3.21

Well judged, versatile and fun. The jacked-up hot hatch done well.

7.2 6.2 1301 41.5 -

Explorer Extended Range Premium RWD ★★★⯪☆ 23.10.24

Electric family crossover is better to drive than rivals, but at a cost.

5.8 4.8 2067 2.9 262

Kuga 2.5 PHEV ST-Line ★★★⯪☆ 24.6.20

Good value and potentially frugal, but this SUV has more to give.

- - 1844 - -

Mustang Mach-E Extended Range RWD ★★★★☆ 23.6.21

Worthy of the name? Perhaps not, but it's still impressive and likeable.

6.8 5.6 2130 - -

Mustang Mach-E GT AWD ★★★☆☆ 27.4.22

Has its moments but lacks the dynamism of a typical fast Ford.

4.2 3.5 2298 - -

Mustang Dark Horse ★★★⯪☆ 20.11.24

Brimming with character but more compromised than many of its forebears.

4.5 3.5 1853 26.1 -

Tourneo Courier 1.0 Ecoboost Titanium ★★★⯪☆ 10.7.24

Has some Ford-typical star quality but not enough for the money.

10.8 10.6 1426 47.4 -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

Transit Custom L2H1 320 2.0 EcoBlue 150PS Limited ★★★★☆ 8.5.24

Likely to remain the default commercial vehicle, despite a high price.

12.1 11.8 1971 38.8 -

Ranger 2.0TD EcoBlue 205PS Wildtrak ★★★★⯪ 14.6.23

Pick-up truck is practical, car-like to drive and generally hard to fault.

9.8 9.9 2348 36.6 -

F-150 Lightning Platinum ★★★⯪☆ 17.5.23

Electric truck has huge utility and appealing range, but its size and price will put many off.

4.5 3.7 3121 - 288

GENESIS

G70 2.2 CRDi Luxury Line ★★★⯪☆ 10.11.21

Likeable left-field choice struggles to threaten the establishment.

7.2 6.7 1751 60.4 -

Electrified G80 ★★★⯪☆ 12.10.22

Electric limo doesn't quite hit the mark like its Kia and Hyundai platform-mates.

4.4 4.0 2349 - 272

GV60 Sport Plus ★★★★☆ 24.8.22

Handsome, fast, sophisticated electric crossover is the best Genesis yet.

3.8 3.1 2192 - 220

GV80 3.0D Luxury 5-Seater ★★★⯪☆ 15.9.21

Rich, spacious and comfortable but not a world-class luxury SUV yet.

6.7 6.6 2217 45.0 -

GWM ORA

Funky Cat 48kWh First Edition ★★⯪☆☆ 1.2.23

Electric hatch is decent value and has funky looks but is a mediocre experience overall.

7.7 7.2 1580 - 154

HONDA

E Advance ★★★⯪☆ 26.8.20

More than just a pretty face in the EV crowd but its limited range is an issue.

7.9 - 1535 - 110

Jazz 1.5 i-MMD Hybrid EX ★★★⯪☆ 7.10.20

Eminently practical, impressively frugal and pretty joyless to drive.

9.6 10.0 1248 57.0 -

Civic Type R GT ★★★★⯪ 25.10.17

Hot hatch is a sheer delight for enthusiast drivers and their bank balances.

5.7 7.1 1400 57.0 -

HR-V e:HEV Advance Style ★★★⯪☆ 24.11.21

Fine ergonomics and big on superficial charm but leaves us cold.

9.2 9.3 1397 43.2 -

e:Ny1 Advance ★★★☆☆ 1.11.23

EV is charming in some ways but has too little substance to justify the price.

8.6 6.9 1756 - 211

HYUNDAI

i10 1.2 MPi Premium ★★★★☆ 15.4.20

Smallest Hyundai regains leadership of the city car class.

12.3 12.9 999 52.5 -

i20 1.0 T-GDi 100 48V SE Connect ★★★⯪☆ 24.2.21

Steady gains for a versatile runabout still lacking some personality.

9.7 10.1 1065 63.5 -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

i20 N ★★★★⯪ 25.8.21

N division's finest car to date. A serious hot hatch with real dynamic polish.

6.1 5.4 1231 50.6 -

i30 Tourer 1.4 T-GDi Premium SE ★★★⯪☆ 13.9.17

Competent, servile, inoffensive-looking family estate offers little to like or dislike.

9.5 9.7 1425 48.9 -

i30 N Performance ★★★⯪☆ 28.12.17

Hyundai's first hot hatch attempt is fast and full-blooded with rough edges.

6.4 5.6 1478 43.1 -

Ioniq 6 RWD Ultimate ★★★⯪☆ 7.6.23

Usable, rangy and innovative EV let down by cabin packaging and ride.

7.2 6.2 2006 - 272

Kona 1.0 120PS Advance ★★★★☆ 6.9.23

Hyundai brings some cheer, value and space to the compact crossover class.

10.4 10.3 1352 50.4 -

Tucson 1.6 T-GDi Hybrid Premium ★★★★☆ 17.3.21

Tucson shows that Hyundai can do both style and substance.

7.6 6.2 1612 47.7 -

Ioniq 5 N ★★★★★ 7.8.24

A little big and heavy, but compelling like no other EV to date.

3.5 2.7 2221 - 224

Santa Fe Hybrid 4WD Premium ★★★★☆ 16.10.24

A superb lounge on wheels, but let down by its powertrain.

7.9 7.5 2007 32.9 -

Nexo ★★★⯪☆ 12.6.19

Impressive effort that heads in the right direction for hydrogen fuel cell cars.

9.6 9.7 1852 - -

INEOS

Grenadier 3.0 T Fieldmaster ★★★⯪☆ 20.9.23

Unquestionably a serious proposition but maybe lacking in innovation.

8.0 8.1 2682 20.9 -

JAGUAR

XE 2.0 200PS R-Sport ★★★★⯪ 1.7.15

Junior saloon hits the spot, matching the best of its German rivals at their own game.

7.6 6.7 1530 48.7 -

XF 2.0d 180PS R-Sport ★★★★⯪ 2.12.15

A more mature, better all-round prospect, with excellent dynamics.

9.4 9.0 1595 - -

XF Sportbrake 300PS R-Sport AWD ★★★⯪☆ 17.4.19

Estate is built on enthusiast values but in need of a wider update.

6.6 6.2 1727 36.8 -

E-Pace D180 AWD SE ★★★⯪☆ 11.4.18

Misses the mark for keen drivers but is a desirable SUV nevertheless.

9.9 10.5 1768 49.2 -

I-Pace EV400 S ★★★★⯪ 12.9.18

Jaguar's landmark car strikes a heavy blow to Tesla's luxury EV monopoly.

4.5 3.5 2236 - -

F-Pace 2.0d AWD R-Sport ★★★★☆ 11.5.16

By and large, and engine apart, this is the Jaguar SUV that we hoped it would be.

9.2 9.7 1775 - -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

F-Pace SVR ★★★★⯪ 24.7.19

Broad-batted and can vividly thrill but hasn't forgotten its SUV roots.

4.1 3.5 2070 29.4 -

F-Pace 400e R-Dynamic HSE ★★★★⯪ 1.12.21

Facelift hits the mark. Electrification is a mixed but creditable success.

5.1 4.6 2264 - 24

F-Type V8 S Convertible ★★★★☆ 12.6.13

As good to drive as it is to behold – but at a material and financial cost.

4.0 3.4 1810 28.5 -

F-Type V6 S Coupé ★★★★⯪ 11.6.14

Stunning looks and a sensation to drive but not quite unequalled.

4.9 4.2 1755 32.5 -

F-Type 2.0 R-Dynamic Coupé ★★★★☆ 22.11.17

Plenty of driver appeal, but its cracking chassis merits a better engine.

5.7 5.1 1640 43.6 -

F-Type P575 R AWD Coupé ★★★★☆ 29.4.20

The same likeable bruiser behind those prettier features.

- - 1743 - -

JEEP

Avenger Electric Summit ★★★⯪☆ 24.1.24

Not perfect but successfully takes Jeep in a fresh direction.

8.3 6.9 1601 - 172

TOP 3

BEST PICK-UP TRUCKS

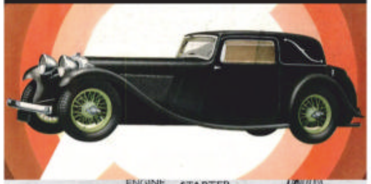
1 Ford Ranger

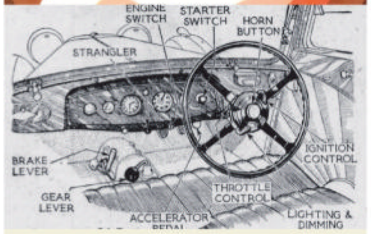
2 Toyota Hilux

3 Isuzu D-Max

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

Road tests revisited





1932 SS 1 COUPE

Coventry coachbuilder Swallow uses chassis and engines from Standard to produce drophead coupé that looks three times as expensive as it actually is and performs in kind, having “lively acceleration, powerful braking, good roadholding and comfortable riding”.

Price £310
Engine 6 cyls in line, 2054cc, petrol
Power 48bhp (est)
Torque na
Weight 1080kg
10-30mph 5.8sec
0-60mph 50sec (est)
Top speed 80mph (est)
Economy 22mpg

1976 JAGUAR XJ-S

Company formerly known as SS converts its V12 XJ limousine into a sleek grand touring coupé. Has a few flaws but no matter when it’s “very accelerative, fantastically flexible, highly refined, a joy to drive and, in spite of its high price, still cheaper than its international competition”.

Price £9794
Engine V12, 5343cc, petrol
Power 285bhp at 5500rpm
Torque 294lb ft at 3500rpm
Weight 1953kg
0-60mph 6.9sec
0-100mph 16.9sec
Top speed 154mph
Economy 15.4mpg

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				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Compass 2.0 Multijet II 140 4WD Limited	★★★½☆	3.10.18	Pricey, pokey, gruff Jeep is a long shot for SUV market success.	11.0	11.5	1540	44.8	-
Compass 4xe S	★★★☆☆	16.2.22	Not without niche appeal but off the pace in too many respects.	6.4	5.7	1872	46.9	22
Renegade 2.0 Multijet II 140 4WD Limited	★★★½☆	28.10.15	Charmingly authentic but also pricey and rather rough and ready.	10.8	11.2	1502	52.6	-
Renegade 4xe Trailhawk	★★★☆☆	30.6.21	Electrified Jeep has some charm but is typically rough and ready.	6.7	5.6	1816	39.4	21
Wrangler 2.2 Multijet II Overland	★★★★☆	10.4.19	Off-road icon is now more competent on it.	9.0	9.1	2122	37.6	-
KGM								
Tivoli XLV ELX Auto	★★★☆☆	14.9.16	Practical, well-priced crossover is competent but far from compelling.	12.0	12.6	1469	-	-
KIA								
Picanto 1.0 MPI 2	★★★½☆	11.9.24	No great advance for the breed but likeable, capable and still here.	13.4	13.9	985	51.4	-
Ceed 1.6 CRDi 115bhp 2	★★★★☆	29.8.18	Big step up in the family hatchback class is a watershed moment for Kia.	9.9	9.6	1411	70.3	-
Proceed 1.4 T-GDi GT-Line S	★★★½☆	27.2.19	Alluring and interesting but not quite as special to drive as it looks.	9.5	8.9	1475	42.6	-
Xceed 1.4 T-GDi First Edition	★★★½☆	20.11.19	Looks good and drives well but lacks some practicality and polish.	9.3	8.7	1452	46.8	-
Soul EV Urban	★★★½☆	5.7.23	Not actually that cheap but likeable and complete.	8.0	8.3	1569	-	147
Niro EV 3	★★★★☆	7.9.22	A good family EV made better, despite some missed opportunities.	6.9	5.6	1739	-	246
EV3 81.4kWh GT-Line	★★★★☆	31.12.24	New-era Niro is rationally compelling but not a game-changer.	7.2	6.4	1858	2.6	265
Sportage 1.6 HEV 2WD GT-Line S	★★★½☆	15.6.22	Bold family SUV catches the eye but won’t hold your interest to drive.	7.3	6.4	1658	44.8	-
EV6 77.4kWh RWD GT-Line S	★★★★☆	9.10.24	Not the outstanding EV it once was but still a likeably bold choice.	7.5	6.3	–	2.9	227
EV6 GT	★★★½☆	4.10.23	Lots of pace and usability for the money but not enough driver appeal.	3.6	2.7	2161	-	209
Sorento 1.6 HEV T-GDi AWD 2	★★★½☆	20.1.21	Lacks polish, but its abundant utility appeal and value shine through.	8.5	7.9	2006	43.3	-
EV9 GT-Line S	★★★★☆	31.1.24	Style, space, versatility and range for a more reasonable price than rivals.	5.1	4.6	2660	-	220
LAMBORGHINI								
Huracán Performante	★★★★½	11.10.17	Breathtaking track makeover brings it close to greatness.	2.9	2.0	1590	22.4	-
Huracán Evo RWD	★★★★½	20.5.20	Finest driver’s car Lamborghini makes is also the most attainable.	-	-	1389	-	-
Revuelto	★★★★½	4.12.24	New-era V12 Lamborghini is an extraordinary statement of intent.	2.5	1.7	1960	24.1	6
Urus	★★★★☆	3.7.19	Italy’s latest ‘mostro’ has a driving experience to blow your mind.	3.3	2.8	2285	28.5	-
LAND ROVER								
Range Rover Evoque P300e R-Dynamic HSE	★★★★½	10.2.21	A better plug-in compact SUV. Expensive but slick and luxurious.	6.8	5.9	2158	32.7	24
Discovery Sport D180 AWD SE	★★★★☆	8.1.20	Off-road fidelity and character outweigh a lacklustre powertrain.	10.3	10.5	2145	47.5	-
Discovery TD6 HSE Luxury	★★★★½	12.4.17	A proper Land Rover, modernised, refined and as likeable as ever.	8.7	8.8	2230	-	-
Range Rover Velar D240 HSE	★★★½☆	30.8.17	Stylish, advanced and accomplished but in need of a better powertrain.	9.3	9.0	2089	48.2	-
Defender 110 P400 X	★★★★½	13.5.20	World-class capability. Brilliant on and off road – at a price.	-	-	2388	-	-
Range Rover Sport D300 Dynamic SE	★★★★½	2.11.22	Deeply appealing and deeply accomplished, with a price to match.	7.2	6.6	2511	42.5	-
Range Rover Sport SV Edition One	★★★½☆	28.8.24	More capable than most rivals, but others are more compelling.	3.9	5.1	2546	28.9	-
Range Rover D350 HSE	★★★★½	13.7.22	A fantastically well-isolated luxury car and fully paid-up capable 4x4.	6.3	6.0	2667	35.9	-
LEXUS								
LBX FWD Premium Plus Design	★★★½☆	29.5.24	Crossover convinces as a small premium car, but only just.	8.4	8.4	1306	45.2	-
NX 350h AWD Premium Plus Pack	★★★★☆	16.3.22	Interesting, refined and efficient, but not as polished as the best.	7.1	6.7	1812	44.7	-
RX 500h F Sport	★★★½☆	22.3.23	Classy and luxurious, but that might not be enough for keener drivers.	6.1	5.5	2088	31.7	-
ES 300h Takumi	★★★½☆	6.2.19	Boldly styled, economical saloon has a singularly rational but dry character.	8.7	7.6	1742	48.8	-
LS 500h Premier	★★★☆☆	6.6.18	Limo has never been more appealing or less competitive in key areas.	5.9	5.3	2404	42.2	-
RC F Ultimate Edition	★★★½☆	6.11.24	Bellows in some ways, whispers in others. A little flawed but never dull or boring.	4.7	3.8	1733	30.1	-
LM 350h AWD Takumi	★★★☆☆	7.2.24	MPV is a fascinating luxury-market curio but no threat to the old-school limo.	8.6	8.2	2368	40.5	-
LOTUS								
Eletre R	★★★½☆	24.7.24	There’s plenty to like about the new Lotus but little sign of the old Lotus.	3.1	2.2	2682	-	216
MASERATI								
Ghibli Diesel	★★★½☆	12.3.14	Saloon isn’t lacking in style but is a little short on substance.	6.5	6.0	2040	40.4	-
Grecale Trofeo	★★★½☆	18.10.23	A belting engine but high-priced and not the best-driving Grecale.	3.6	3.2	2097	33.6	-
Levante Diesel	★★★☆☆	30.11.16	A mildly interesting also-ran, with a weak engine and so-so handling.	6.8	6.9	2205	41.5	-
Levante S Granlusso	★★★½☆	8.5.19	Better engine improves the class’s curate’s egg but can’t redeem it.	5.1	4.5	2232	23.7	-
Granturismo Trofeo	★★★½☆	11.9.24	An appealing grand tourer that lacks some sophistication for the price.	3.6	3.1	-	33.0	-
MC20 Cielo	★★★★☆	16.10.24	Dynamic iconoclast, old-school charmer, occasional GT. A unique supercar.	4.0	2.8	1783	29.6	-
MAZDA								
2 1.5 Skyactiv-G 90PS SE-L Nav	★★★★☆	22.4.15	The go-to option for keen drivers is also a convincing all-rounder.	10.4	11.0	1050	-	-
3 2.0 Skyactiv-X 181PS GT Sport	★★★★☆	6.11.19	Sweet to drive and great to behold, but the Skyactiv-X engine is no knockout.	9.1	9.1	1425	57.0	-
MX-30 145PS GT Sport Tech	★★★½☆	10.3.21	Has smart looks and a plush interior, but the first Mazda EV deserved more.	9.1	8.6	1663	-	-

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*For three weeks from publication date

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
CX-5 2.2D 150PS 2WD Sport Nav	★★★★☆	28.6.17	Still moderately left of field but now likeable in greater proportions.	9.4	9.2	1620	53.9	-
CX-60 e-Skyactiv D 3.3 RWD Exclusive-Line	★★★⯪☆	10.5.23	Old-school in all the best ways, but the ride is difficult to overlook.	7.6	7.2	1893	52.3	-
MX-5 1.5 SE-L Nav	★★★★⯪	2.9.15	An outstanding and usable sports car at an outstanding price.	8.4	7.9	1050	-	-

McLAREN

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
720S	★★★★★	24.5.17	Sufficiently complete and exciting to dominate rivals and hugely fast.	2.9	2.0	1419	24.2	-
750S	★★★★☆	19.6.24	McLaren's mainstay is a bit of a wild child – at times, to its own cost.	2.9	2.0	1412	28.8	-
Artura	★★★★⯪	19.10.22	Brilliantly packaged, invitingly poised and wise use of electrification.	3.2	2.1	1552	32.9	17
Artura Spider	★★★★⯪	6.11.24	Artura finds extra form in convertible guise.	3.1	2.2	1618	27.2	17
GT	★★★⯪☆	27.1.21	Plenty of pace and purity, less GT-typical usability and refinement.	3.3	2.3	1580	34.2	

MERCEDES-AMG

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A45 S 4Matic+ Plus	★★★★⯪	4.3.20	AMG brings its hottest hatch yet to life without harming usability.	4.1	3.3	1661	41.5	-
C63 S E Performance 4Matic+ Night Edition Premium Plus Estate	★★★☆☆	31.7.24	Fascinating engineering feat falls flat as an exciting super-estate.	3.3	2.8	2217	27.1	7.1
GT 63 4Matic+ 4-Door Coupé	★★★★⯪	13.3.19	AMG defies physics with a four-door GT that handles beautifully.	3.3	2.7	2135	30.1	-
GT 63 S E Performance 4-Door Coupé	★★★⯪☆	21.6.23	Rocket-ship GT with astonishing powertrain but still lacks driver reward.	2.9	2.5	2339	23.9	6
EQS 53 4Matic+ Night Edition	★★★★☆	8.6.22	Good but doesn't quite live up to its spectacular on-paper potential.	3.6	2.8	2673	-	259
S63 E Performance Night Edition	★★★★☆	2.10.24	Prodigiously quick, confoundingly slick in its handling, but has a coarseness to it.	3.5	2.7	2666	26.1	-
GLE 53 4Matic+ Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	14.10.20	Remarkable dynamic versatility but lacks some driver appeal.	5.4	4.9	2471	29.4	-
SL 63 4Matic+ Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	26.7.23	Stonking V8 doesn't quite redeem a car of as many sacrifices as gains.	3.5	2.8	1939	26.2	-
GT 63 4Matic+ Premium Plus Coupé	★★★⯪☆	14.8.24	Fearsomely quick and truly usable but less lovable than before.	3.1	2.7	1972	30.7	-

MERCEDES-BENZ

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A200 Sport	★★★★☆	4.7.18	Luxurious and desirable but not good enough to drive to take top spot.	8.7	7.9	1375	56.7	-
A200 AMG Line Executive	★★★★☆	24.5.23	Significant progress for a keen-handling and efficient premium hatch.	7.8	7.3	1396	59.3	-
A250e AMG Line Premium	★★★☆☆	5.8.20	Falls some way short of a rounded 'premium' driving experience.	6.7	5.4	1665	57.8	-
B180 Sport	★★★★☆	3.4.19	In an ever-shrinking niche, this compact MPV deserves consideration.	8.4	8.3	1405	51.3	-
CLA 250 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★☆☆	21.8.19	Nearer the mark to look at but still way wide of it as a driver's car.	6.8	6.1	1555	48.3	-
C300e AMG Line	★★★★⯪	4.5.22	Long-range hybrid tech gives C-Class an outstanding selling point.	5.8	5.1	2005	49.0	48
E220d AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★★☆	3.1.24	An effective blend of convention, comfort, luxury and modernity.	7.2	5.9	1917	65.8	-
EQE 350+ AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	4.1.23	Hot on comfort and tech but lacklustre on range, material quality and space.	6.0	5.5	2386	-	262
EQS 450 Business Class SUV	★★★⯪☆	6.3.24	Ultra-luxurious seven-seater strays confusingly into MPV territory.	5.5	5.2	2899	-	265
S580e L AMG Line Premium Plus Executive	★★★★⯪	6.4.22	Plug-in S-Class is the best of an otherwise ordinary generation.	5.2	4.2	2530	37.0	45
EQA 250 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★☆☆	17.11.21	Competent but entirely average. For the money, we expect better.	8.4	7.6	2030	-	200
GLB 220d 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★⯪☆	16.9.20	Smart looking and practical but its identity feels stretched at times.	7.4	7.1	1810	55.4	-
EQB 300 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★⯪☆	18.5.22	A versatile premium EV that doesn't easily command its premium.	7.7	6.8	2235	-	-
GLC 300 4Matic AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	13.9.23	Shines in places but doesn't notably elevate the GLC proposition.	6.5	6.0	1929	41.2	-
GLS 400d 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★⯪☆	12.2.20	Has much to commend it but not enough to be the S-Class of SUVs.	6.5	6.0	2634	38.2	-
G350d AMG Line	★★★★☆	17.7.19	Customary capability, charm and ego, now with 21st-century luxury.	7.5	7.2	2451	31.3	-
G500 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★★☆	25.9.24	Anachronistic, iconoclastic and expensive but very hard not to love.	5.1	4.5	–	30.7	-
CLE 300e AMG Line Premium Plus Coupé	★★★★☆	13.11.24	Electrification brings traditional Merc strengths to a desirable mid-sized coupé.	6.1	5.5	2122	37.1	49

MG

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
3 1.5 3Form Sport	★★★⯪☆	25.12.13	No slayer of the best mainstream giants but cheap done very cheerfully.	11.4	11.6	1240	41.4	-
3 Hybrid+ Trophy	★★★⯪☆	12.6.24	Good value and with no serious vices but still lacks a final layer of polish.	6.8	6.2	1311	47.9	-
4 EV Long Range SE	★★★★☆	5.4.23	Good value, useful and fun to drive to boot.	7.1	6.1	1692	-	185
5 SW EV Exclusive	★★★⯪☆	25.11.20	MG's second EV does cheap motoring much better than the first.	8.0	7.1	1538	-	161
ZS EV Exclusive	★★★☆☆	4.12.19	Practical, affordable MG fails to truly move the game on.	8.9	8.0	1556	-	113
ZS Hybrid+ Trophy	★★★☆☆	22.1.25	Roomier, cleverer and better-equipped than you would expect for the money.	7.6	6.6	1422	41.5	–

MINI

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Countryman C Exclusive	★★★⯪☆	17.4.24	Spacious but sends mixed messages on family-friendly refinement.	8.7	7.7	1618	46.9	-
Aceman SE Exclusive	★★★⯪☆	8.1.25	Compact SUV has the usual Mini charm but limited extra grown-up appeal.	6.8	5.7	1756	3.1	162

MORGAN

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Plus Four	★★★⯪☆	12.8.20	Refreshing and fun in that true Morgan way but lacks a little polish.	5.1	4.3	1013	54.0	-
Plus Six	★★★★☆	10.4.24	The individualist's sports car made better.	4.4	3.3	1188	37.2	-
Super 3	★★★★⯪	9.11.22	Adds some subtle modernity to the 3 Wheeler's endless giggles.	6.9	5.9	644	43.5	-

NISSAN

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Juke 1.0 DIG-T 117 Tekna	★★★⯪☆	29.1.20	Impressive in some respects but outstanding in few.	11.9	11.8	1256	46.0	-
Qashqai 1.3 DIG-T 158 Tekna	★★★★☆	28.7.21	Ticks the important family car boxes but its powertrain frustrates.	10.0	9.3	1412	44.9	-
Ariya 87kWh Evolve	★★★⯪☆	26.10.22	Surprisingly traditional and luxurious but not wholly successful.	8.2	6.4	2109	-	-
X-Trail e-Power e-4orce AWD Tekna	★★★★☆	22.2.23	Capable all-rounder that deals effortlessly with everyday life.	6.6	6.0	1947	33.8	-

OMODA

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
5 1.6 TGDI Comfort	★★⯪☆☆	20.11.24	Chinese SUV has some promise as a purely rational buy but feels under-developed.	7.4	6.3	1474	38.2	-

PEUGEOT

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
e-208 Allure Premium	★★★★☆	6.5.20	Stylish, drivable, usable, reasonably priced – and the best small EV	-	-	1455	38.2	-
308 1.2T Puretech 130 GT	★★★★☆	25.5.22	A reminder of the old Peugeot magic. Small, supple and a bit special.	9.5	9.2	1358	55.3	-

TOP 3

BEST HYBRIDS

1 Toyota Corolla

2 Volkswagen Golf eHybrid

3 Volvo V60 T6

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

408 Hybrid 180 GT e-EAT8 ★★★★☆ 11.10.23
Novel Peugeot shows an alternative path for the family car.
8.2 7.3 1746 42.1 40

508 BlueHDi 180 S&S GT Auto
★★★★☆ 24.10.18
Stylish and likeable but lacking the polish of more premium rivals.
8.8 8.5 1671 52.0 -

508 SW Hybrid 225 S&S Allure e-EAT8
★★★★☆ 8.7.20
This is a comfortable car that looks smart and feels classy.
- - 1720 - -

508 SW Hybrid4 PSE ★★★★☆ 5.5.21
Hits notable handling highs but feels less than sharp elsewhere.
5.7 4.7 1892 44.0 -

e-2008 GT Line ★★★⯨☆ 30.9.20
Cheaper versions impress; pricier ones won't worry class leaders.
9.5 8.9 1638 - -

3008 1.6 BlueHDi 120 GT Line
★★★⯨☆ 18.1.17
In challenging company, the 3008 promises more than it delivers.
12.0 12.1 1300 53.2 -

e-3008 73kWh Allure ★★★⯨☆ 4.8.24
Electric family SUV is rich, handsome and refined but no technical tour de force.
8.5 7.1 2132 - 219

POLESTAR

2 BST Edition 270 ★★★⯨☆ 12.4.23
A creditable attempt at electric car thrills, although not quite fully formed.
4.5 3.4 2161 - 188

TOP 3

BEST ESTATE CARS

1 Skoda Superb

2 BMW 5 Series Touring

3 Dacia Jogger

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

PORSCHE

718 Boxster ★★★★⯨ 8.6.16
Better than ever objectively, but at the expense of vital subjective appeal.
5.4 4.3 1395 35.9 -

718 Cayman S ★★★★⯨ 10.8.16
Still the greatest sports coupé out there, even if it doesn't sound like it.
4.8 3.9 1430 - -

718 Cayman GTS ★★★★⯨ 9.5.18
Outstanding in lots of ways but, so far, less Cayman may still be more.
4.8 3.6 1390 39.0 -

718 Spyder ★★★★⯨ 1.4.20
Spyder's flat six rectifies most, if not quite all, of the 718's shortcomings.
4.3 3.5 1350 30.1 -

718 Cayman GT4 RS ★★★★★ 14.9.22
A feast of noise, revs, handling poise and thrills. Incredibly special.
3.9 3.0 1444 27.1 -

911 Carrera S ★★★★⯨ 29.5.19
Faster, richer and more competent than the 991, if less vivacious.
3.4 2.8 1525 39.4 -

911 GT3 PDK ★★★★⯨ 11.8.21
Less versatile than some past GT3s but still spectacularly good.
3.4 2.7 1430 29.2 -

911 Turbo S ★★★★⯨ 10.8.22
Has a questionable raison d'être but is engaging and awesomely capable.
2.5 2.0 1640 36.3 -

911 Carrera T ★★★★☆ 30.8.23
Sharper 911 has a likeable simplicity but makes key compromises.
4.9 3.8 1456 39.1 -

911 GT3 RS ★★★★⯨ 22.11.23
Esoteric even by hardcore 911 standards but simply monumental.
3.2 2.5 1476 26.7 -

911 Dakar ★★★★☆ 10.1.24
Rally-raid-themed throwback charms like no other modern 911.
3.3 2.6 1660 36.0 -

911 S/T ★★★★★ 3.7.24
Porsche's GT division alters its recipe to deliver an all-time great.
3.7 2.6 1408 30.9 -

Macan Turbo ★★★★⯨ 4.6.14
Luxury SUV meets sports car in a compact, well-priced package.
4.7 4.3 2050 30.9 -

Cayenne S ★★★★⯨ 21.2.24
Rebooted Cayenne impresses and the charming V8 is our pick.
5.0 4.3 2256 28.8 -

Cayenne Turbo ★★★★☆ 5.9.18
As impressive as ever but not quite the driver's car it once was.
3.9 3.4 2307 31.5 -

Cayenne Turbo S E-Hybrid
★★★⯨☆ 27.5.20
Technically impressive but fails to make a convincing case for itself.
- - 2490 - -

Cayenne Turbo GT Coupé
★★★★☆ 20.7.22
Uncompromising rapid SUV is a bit of a monster – but a likeable one.
3.1 2.7 2251 26.1 -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

Panamera 4 E-Hybrid ★★★★☆ 22.1.25
Understated plug-in hybrid is a Swiss Army knife super-saloon.
3.8 2.4 2370 30.1 29

Taycan Turbo S ★★★★⯨ 30.10.24
Porsche deftly keeps its superb EV on the boil.
2.6 1.9 2356 2.7 233

RENAULT

Clio TCe 100 Iconic ★★★★⯨ 27.11.19
Plusher, smoother, more mature. A car of substance as well as style.
11.6 10.9 1138 56.9 -

Mégane E-Tech Techno ★★★⯨☆ 23.11.22
Likeable and eye-catching, but rivals have moved the EV game on.
6.9 5.4 1688 - 198

Captur TCe 130 S-Edition EDC
★★★⯨☆ 18.3.20
Second-generation Captur should prove popular, but not with this powertrain.
9.4 9.2 1363 53.1 -

Arkana E-Tech Hybrid 145 S-Edition
★★★⯨☆ 13.10.21
Showy styling clothes an eminently sensible but unspectacular car.
11.0 10.1 1365 58.3 -

Scenic E-Tech Iconic Long Range
★★★★☆ 26.6.24
The Scenic finally conforms but does so with style and substance.
8.1 6.3 1916 - 313

Austral E-Tech Iconic Esprit Alpine
★★★⯨☆ 19.7.23
Clever hybrid and pleasant cabin but let down by clumsy dynamics.
8.5 6.9 1696 43.5 -

ROLLS-ROYCE

Ghost ★★★★⯨ 13.1.21
Most technologically advanced Rolls-Royce is an exceptional limo.
4.7 3.8 2490 28.5 -

Phantom ★★★★★ 4.4.18
The world's greatest and finest luxury car is now also the very best.
5.5 4.4 2780 28.4 -

Spectre ★★★★⯨ 20.12.23
Superbly lavish and intoxicatingly refined, if shy of epoch-making.
4.1 3.1 2935 - 245

Cullinan Black Badge ★★★★☆ 19.2.20
Far more likeable to drive than look at, for those who have a use for it.
4.9 4.2 2739 23.6 -

SEAT

Ibiza 1.0 TSI SE Technology
★★★★⯨ 19.7.17
Grown-up supermini shows its rivals how it's done – in most respects.
10.0 10.0 1047 55.6 -

Leon eHybrid FR ★★★⯨☆ 2.12.20
Competent and efficient but verges on being forgettable to drive.
7.2 6.2 1558 46.3 26

Arona 1.0 TSI SE Technology
★★★★☆ 15.11.17
Polished, mature all-rounder has since lost its class-best crown.
10.5 10.7 1149 40.9 -

Ateca 1.6 TDI Ecomotive SE
★★★★⯨ 19.10.16
Former class leader for all the right reasons – desirability included.
10.5 10.3 1408 - -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

Ateca 1.5 Eco TSI FR Black Edition DSG
★★★☆☆ 25.10.23
Once-appealing Nissan Qashqai rival now shows some signs of neglect.
8.9 8.0 1396 44.4 -

SKODA

Fabia 1.0 TSI 95PS SE Comfort
★★★★⯨ 9.2.22
Comfy, spacious and good value, this supermini is Skoda at its best.
9.9 9.7 1117 58.7 -

Scala SE 1.5 TSI 150PS DSG
★★★⯨☆ 31.7.19
Different from the bigger Octavia but perhaps not by enough.
7.9 7.3 1200 52.9 -

Octavia 2.0 TDI 150PS SE L First Edition Estate DSG ★★★★☆ 2.9.20
Leads the charge to take Skoda upmarket and mostly succeeds.
8.4 8.7 1510 73.0 -

Octavia Estate vRS ★★★★☆ 29.1.25
A fine estate made more engaging rather than a great hot hatch made a bit bigger.
5.9 4.8 - 37.6 -

Superb SE L 2.0 TDI 150PS Estate
★★★★★ 17.7.24
The large, functional estate car modernised in all the right ways.
8.4 8.2 1673 68.7 -

Karoq 2.0 TDI 150PS Scout
★★★⯨☆ 30.1.19
Practical, comfortable Skoda is short on charm and dynamic polish.
8.9 9.6 1629 47.1 -

Enyaq iV 80 Lounge ★★★★☆ 18.8.21
Practical, rangy, well priced. Hits a sweet spot in the EV market.
8.3 7.8 2098 - 262

SMART

#1 Premium ★★★⯨☆ 8.11.23
Drivability frustrations mar an otherwise agreeable experience.
5.6 4.6 1861 - 229

#3 Premium ★★★⯨☆ 15.5.24
Makings of an interesting alternative EV but let down by the finer details.
5.7 4.9 1832 - 205

SUBARU

Crosstrek 2.0i e-Boxer Touring
★★★⯨☆ 28.2.24
Improved manners for junior off-roader are welcome, if not transformative.
10.4 10.4 1620 45.3 -

Outback 2.5i Lineartronic Touring
★★★⯨☆ 27.9.23
A pretty good answer to a question that only a few people asked.
9.3 8.7 1690 42.8 -

Solterra AWD Touring ★★★☆☆ 15.3.23
A hint of Subaru-typical capability doesn't take this EV quite far enough.
6.7 6.2 2051 - 169

SUZUKI

Vitara 1.6 SZ5 ★★★⯨☆ 29.4.15
The Vitara is solidly built in Suzuki's image – and that's fine with us.
9.5 9.5 1124 - -

SX4 S-Cross 1.6 DDiS SZ4
★★★⯨☆ 30.10.13
Quietly capable in most respects and remarkable for its parsimony.
10.0 10.1 1305 67.5 -

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Across 2.5 PHEV E-Four CVT	★★★★⯪	7.4.21	Excellent hybrid powertrain makes it one of the best PHEVs around.	6.4	5.8	1966	44.4	48

TESLA

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Model 3 Standard Range Plus	★★★★☆	4.9.19	Wrinkles aside, it offers great electric performance and usability at this price.	5.8	4.7	1633	-	156
Model 3 Long Range	★★★★☆	14.2.24	Packs a real punch. Both updated Model 3s are fine propositions.	4.4	3.4	1846	-	277
Model Y Long Range AWD	★★★★☆	23.3.22	A far better electric car than a premium SUV.	4.7	3.6	1978	-	234
Model S P90D	★★★★⯪	20.4.16	Great EV, intriguing driver's car. Not quite the perfect luxury GT.	3.5	3.0	2220	-	214
Model S Plaid	★★★⯪☆	2.8.23	Astonishing pace but not a fully rounded performance saloon.	2.4	1.7	2220	-	301
Model X 90D	★★★★☆	15.2.17	High-rise EV strains under SUV brief but still feels like a history maker.	5.2	4.2	2508	-	147

TOYOTA

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Aygo X Limited Edition	★★★⯪☆	11.5.22	A mostly very grown-up small car but also an expensive one.	15.6	16.5	974	58.7	-
Yaris 1.5 Hybrid Design	★★★★☆	23.9.20	Grows not only in stature but also in ability and subjective appeal.	9.2	8.8	1140	65.0	-
GR Yaris Circuit Pack	★★★★★	3.3.21	Toyota, on a roll with driver's cars, provides yet another winner.	5.2	5.0	1283	39.2	-
Corolla 2.0 Hybrid Design Touring Sports	★★★★☆	5.6.19	A big step up for Toyota in a vital sector and a better hybrid to boot.	8.5	7.7	1537	52.6	-
bZ4X AWD Vision	★★★⯪☆	18.1.23	A decent effort all round but not exceptional in any way.	6.4	5.9	2023	-	208
Mirai Design Premium	★★★★☆	16.6.21	Impressive hydrogen fuel cell car has made strides but remains hamstrung overall.	8.7	8.3	1937	-	-
GR Supra Pro	★★★★☆	14.8.19	Fast, usable and has plenty going for it but leaves us wanting more.	4.4	3.6	1495	39.0	-
Hilux 2.8 D-4D GR Sport	★★★⯪☆	1.3.23	Gazoo-branded Ford Ranger Raptor rival is formidable but lacks fun factor.	10.0	9.5	2241	32.5	-

VAUXHALL

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Corsa 1.2 Turbo 100PS Ultimate Nav Auto	★★★⯪☆	22.1.20	Supermini is improved in many ways but lacks the appeal to match its price.	11.2	11.5	1171	51.8	-
Astra 1.2 Turbo 130PS GS Line	★★★⯪☆	5.10.22	Family hatchback's gentle push upmarket is only a qualified success.	9.9	9.2	1304	55.3	-
Crossland X 1.2 Turbo 130PS Elite	★★★☆☆	7.6.17	Typically practical and well priced, but Vauxhall can do better.	9.8	10.3	1278	54.2	-
Mokka 1.2 Turbo 130PS Elite Nav Premium Auto	★★★⯪☆	12.5.21	The driving experience sells a brave design effort just a little short.	9.3	9.1	1238	48.6	-
Grandland X Hybrid4 Ultimate Nav	★★★☆☆	22.4.20	Inspires big expectations and delivers few, but it's an interesting fleet option.	-	-	1800	-	-
Combo Life 1.5 Turbo D 100PS Energy	★★★⯪☆	27.12.18	Usable, spacious and practical, if not very pretty to look at.	14.7	16.2	1552	60.1	-

VOLKSWAGEN

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Polo 1.0 TSI 95PS SE	★★★★⯪	31.1.18	Brings 'big car' space, class, kit and finish to this class like never before.	10.7	11.2	1145	57.1	-
Polo 2.0 TSI GTI+	★★★★☆	1.8.18	A usable, quick and vastly competent effort but not the most thrilling.	6.7	5.9	1342	46.8	-
Golf 1.5 eTSI 150PS Style DSG	★★★★⯪	22.7.20	Additional strengths and familiar ones carry it back to the class lead.	8.3	7.8	1330	60.0	-
Golf 1.5 TSI eHybrid Style	★★★★⯪	23.10.24	New plug-in Golf takes the PHEV hatchback's status to greater heights.	7.2	6.1	1619	46.5	-
Golf GTI	★★★⯪☆	25.9.24	'Mk8.5' version of hot hatchback is slick and effective but not a big enough step forward.	5.3	4.4	-	47.2	-
Golf R	★★★★☆	14.4.21	Most entertaining distillation of the Golf R formula yet – for a price.	4.4	3.7	1520	43.9	-
ID 3 Pro Performance Life	★★★★☆	31.3.21	Bland but with the substance to further the zero-emissions push.	7.0	6.5	1757	-	145
Arteon 2.0 BiTDI 240PS 4Motion R-Line	★★★⯪☆	27.9.17	Considered approach produces an executive flagship short on sparkle.	6.5	6.2	1866	55.6	-
Arteon eHybrid Elegance Shooting Brake	★★★⯪☆	9.6.21	Striking PHEV appears radical but upholds Volkswagen's traditions at heart.	7.1	6.0	1783	52.5	-
ID 7 Pro Match	★★★★⯪	13.3.24	Volkswagen finds some electric form in an unexpected format.	6.1	5.1	2162	-	239
T-Roc 2.0 TSI 190PS 4Motion SEL DSG	★★★★⯪	24.1.18	Shows performance verve, dynamic completeness and stylish swagger.	6.7	6.5	1534	37.5	-
T-Roc 1.5 TSI Evo R-Line Cabriolet DSG	★★⯪☆☆	10.6.20	It brings little worth having to the compact cabriolet niche.	-	-	1540	-	-
Tiguan 1.5 eTSI 150PS R-Line	★★★⯪☆	22.5.24	Functional and mature, but this isn't the engine or trim we would go for.	9.4	9.2	1606	44.9	-
ID 4 GTX Max	★★★⯪☆	27.10.21	GTX adds flavour to ID 4 but doesn't reimagine 'GTI' for the EV age.	6.2	5.6	2220	-	200
Touareg 3.0 TDI 4Motion R-Line Tech	★★★⯪☆	8.8.18	An inoffensive if forgettable bid at a luxury market breakthrough.	7.2	6.6	2292	41.6	-
Touareg 3.0 TSI eHybrid 4Motion Elegance	★★★⯪☆	5.6.24	It's versatile and likeably unpretentious but won't be a default company car choice.	6.2	5.7	2446	34.1	26
Touran 2.0 TDI 150PS SE Family DSG	★★★★☆	3.2.16	A spacious, refined and classy all-rounder – albeit a slightly bland one.	9.9	9.7	1666	-	-
Multivan 1.4 eHybrid Style	★★★★☆	8.3.23	Latest Volkswagen 'bus combines the best bits of both car and van.	8.4	7.1	2243	37.9	14
ID Buzz 77kWh Style Pro	★★★★☆	8.2.23	It costs plenty but offers versatility and luxury accomplishments.	9.5	9.1	2498	-	185
Grand California 600	★★★⯪☆	2.1.20	Grandest California is classy but not half as clever as its smaller namesake.	15.8	16.7	3095	28.5	-
Transporter Sportline Black Edition Kombi SWB	★★★☆☆	30.3.22	Not compromised but hardly enhanced by its sporting agenda.	9.1	9.0	2108	39.1	-
Passat eHybrid 204PS Elegance	★★★★☆	13.11.24	Rounded and with good PHEV credentials, but less compelling than its sister car.	7.2	6.4	1836	44.5	73

VOLVO

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
EX30 Single Motor Extended Range Plus	★★★☆☆	1.5.24	Not enough key strengths – and not enough Volvo pragmatism.	5.7	5.1	1779	-	179
C40 Recharge Twin Ultimate	★★★⯪☆	13.4.22	A transitional model for Volvo that doesn't go quite far enough.	4.4	3.6	2172	-	194
XC40 D4 AWD First Edition	★★★★⯪	7.2.18	Wieldy, classy and simple. As good as its bigger brothers, if not better.	8.5	8.5	1735	43.8	-
XC60 D4 AWD R-Design	★★★⯪☆	5.7.17	The right product at the right time but lacking the right dynamic finish.	8.9	8.9	1836	48.9	-
XC90 D5 AWD Momentum	★★★★☆	17.6.15	A very impressive all-rounder with its own distinctive appeal.	8.3	8.3	2076	-	-
V60 D4 Momentum Pro Auto	★★★★☆	27.6.18	Fine-looking, capable and practical estate with only a few demerits.	8.9	8.3	1669	43.1	-
V60 T6 Recharge AWD R-Design	★★★★⯪	21.9.22	Strong hybrid system gives ageing Volvo a lot of fresh appeal.	4.9	4.3	2036	38.0	51
V90 T6 Recharge AWD R-Design	★★★★⯪	11.11.20	Hardly revolutionary but exceptionally appealing nonetheless.	5.6	4.9	2109	41.9	-

WHAT'S COMING WHEN

Alfa Junior Ibrida Summer
Electric baby crossover gains 134bhp 1.2-litre petrol sibling.

Citroën Ami April
2CV-inspired looks for tiny EV – but 28mph top speed remains.

Porsche 911 GT3 April
New look, "more exhilarating drive" for track-honed halo car.

SCAN THE CODE FOR THE FULL LIST

Why I love…
UNLOVED LAND ROVERS

BY WILL RIMELL

Once upon a time, crossovers could actually go off road

I'm quite a patriotic person, the type who will watch any sporting engagement whatsoever with an English representative. That also translates into the automotive sphere, which is why I have such a deep-seated affinity for Land Rover.

I especially appreciate the earliest examples for their unassuming badassery. Take the Series 1: it may look rudimentary by today's standards, but its compact proportions and innovative four-wheel drive system mean it can tackle unforgiving terrain as capably as a new hatchback handles the M25. Plus, there's undeniably a certain beauty in its raw, function-over-form design. And yes, it's objectively terrible to drive, and the cabin has all the suppleness of a park bench, but you can't have it all.

This boxy aluminium workhorse was the genesis for everything that Land Rover has put its name to over the past 77 years, including the Range Rover, the Discovery and the mega-popular modern Defender to which it serves as an indirect forefather. Most poignantly to me, though (and perhaps uniquely), the expansion of the Land Rover family would ultimately lead us to the oft-overlooked Freelander.

I first fell for Landies when I was around 10 years old. My mum had this beautiful dark green Mk1 Freelander as our family runaround. I couldn't tell you the engine or the spec, but I remember just being completely and utterly in love with it. This was back when do-it-all family crossovers could still exude real kerb appeal and genuine charisma, and to a car-mad kid, its chunky, purposeful proportions were bang on. The side-hinged boot with its lowering rear window still feels novel and fun even two decades later, too.

The Rimell family's P38A didn't need a turn to lean over

> **"Its reliability issues didn't really register on my juvenile radar"**

Sadly, it went after a few years, replaced by a comparatively humdrum Chrysler Voyager after one too many wallet-busting repair jobs. At the time, I didn't understand the decision: why swap from a lovely British 4x4 to a drab, amorphous American people carrier? The Freelander's well-documented reliability issues didn't really register on my juvenile radar.

But that wasn't the end of my family's Land Rover story: fast forward just a few years and I was waiting for a lift after school when around the corner hummed a P38A-generation Range Rover, and behind the wheel of this regal runaround, much to my surprise, was my dad, looking a bit miffed.

He had been forced to buy it after my mum discovered eBay and wanted something with a towbar. I couldn't understand how a man so cosily enveloped in such a sumptuous, full-brown leather interior could look so miserable. Until I clocked that it was leaning quite obviously to one side and was powered by the notorious 4.0-litre petrol V8. Poor man.

But the Rangie's quirks – even its failed air suspension (which never got fixed) and low-double-digit MPG figures – just made me love it even more. Even though it shared space with an MGF, that 4x4 was the best thing we ever had on the driveway.

What we did this week

Ultimate ski lift

I'm no skier, so before heading to Austria to ride in Mercedes' new CLA, I'd never encountered a piste basher. Good lord… This one is a Prinoth Bison. It gets 420bhp and 1399lb ft from its mammoth CAT diesel engine and is the most intimidating vehicle I've ever seen. I was happy admiring it from a distance, before six of us were hustled into a bucket on its front and sent up a mountain for dinner. Minus 16deg C never felt so fresh. **FELIX PAGE**

Missed a spot

Our off-road test at Tixover Quarry took place over a couple of days, and there was one thing that I was adamant about: everything had to stay as dirty as possible for my photos. It's safe to say that we got a few looks in the hotel car park that night as a result… **JACK HARRISON**

Guess the logo

Italy always serves up such a variety of oddities that we simply don't get in the UK. In just one afternoon of driving near Milan on a recent event, I spotted these badges: DR, Evo, Haval, Ickx, Ligier, Mahindra, Sportequipe and XEV – and, sitting in a Cupra showroom in one small town, this one-off, V10 Dodge Viper-based racing barchetta. **KRIS CULMER**

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*With Solutions Personal Contract Plan. 18s+. Subject to status. Ordered by 31 March 2025 from participating Retailers. Indemnities may be required. Subject to changes in vehicle or equipment prices. May be varied or withdrawn at any time. Freepost SEAT Financial Services. Accurate at January 2025. Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Ateca Range mpg (litres/100km) combined: 39.8 (7.1) – 47.1 (6.0). Combined CO_2 emissions 159 – 137 (g/km). Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO_2 figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Data correct at 01/2025.